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MEMOIR

OF

CHARLES HENRY PORTER,

A STUDENT IN THEOLOGY.

BY E. GOODRICH SMITH.

"Eight years before I can become a minister! But I thank the Lord, I can do something for him in that time."—PAGE 14.

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MEMOIR

OF

CHARLES HENRY PORTER.

CHAPTER I.

MR. PORTER'S EARLY LIFE.

The grace of God sometimes makes of a common man an uncommon Christian. Thus it was with the subject of this sketch. Charles Henry Porter was born at Norwich, Connecticut, August 8, 1811. He was not the child of pious parents, enjoyed no uncommon early advantages, and nothing in his childhood encouraged the hope that he would become either pious or useful in after-life. And yet God was pleased to call him into his kingdom, and to bless him with large measures of grace and usefulness. Though his Christian course was short, the Saviour made him the happy instrument of guiding many to his fold.

He was a lad of energetic character, fond of active sports, but averse to books, and wholly heedless of religion. Though an elder brother was receiving a collegiate education, his own great dislike to study

made him reject every proposal to become a student; and he was permitted, at the age of fifteen, to enter into mercantile life, in the city of New York. Here he remained until November, 1828, when Providence thwarted his plans, and led him from the temptations of the city back to his native place, where he was employed in a store. It was here the Holy Spirit met him, and by his renewing influences changed the current of his life.

In August, 1829, a revival of unusual power began in Norwich, and soon spread into all the churches. A cousin of Mr. Porter, since deceased, was one of the earliest converts, and felt deeply interested for his spiritual welfare. She often made him the subject of prayer, and in her frequent visits to his father's family, improved every opportunity to warn him faithfully of his danger, and entreat him to think of the concerns of his soul. Her affectionate persuasion induced him to attend some of the evening meetings. His first serious thoughts on the subject of religion were in a Methodist meeting at Norwich Falls. Before this he had been so careless, that though he had sat in the house of God Sabbath after Sabbath all his life, he could not recollect ever to have been in the least degree alarmed respecting his spiritual state, or even to have had one serious thought. "In fact," said he, "I had few ideas on any subject, as I thought of little except sport and play."

We have no record of the particular form and progress of his convictions, but his alarm and distress were evidently deep and pungent. These convictions, strengthened by the sudden death of a brother in September, continued till November, when he found peace. Listening to an impressive and faithful sermon by the Rev. Mr. Mitchell of Norwich, his sense of sin and of God's justice in punishing it was so great that he trembled on his seat; and while crossing the plain on his way home, he believed he gave his heart to God. Early the next morning he went to tell his cousin what God had done for him. From her account, his views of the character of God and the way of salvation by Christ were just and clear; and his joy and peace in believing, and his humble gratitude to his Saviour for his distinguishing mercy, unusually great.

He at once took a decided stand on the side of Christ; and even then it was his earnest wish to prepare for the ministry, and devote his life to preaching the gospel. In this, however, he encountered the opposition of friends, and for a time yielded to their objections—needing, perhaps, further discipline in the Christian life, to fit him for study in reference to the sacred office. So decided a change, from aversion to books to an immediate desire to study, and the forming of plans so contrary to all his former habits of life, afford striking proof of the powerful

working of the Holy Spirit in his heart. "Old things had passed away; all things had become new."

Mr. Porter was alarmed by the fact that Christians often decline in warm and lively piety, and grow cold in the love and service of their Saviour; and he solemnly determined that, if it were possible, he would always live near to God, and be devoted to the service of Christ. As one of his friends remarks, he seemed from the first determined to be an *uncommon* Christian.

He united with the church in Norwich on the 7th of March, 1830. Here he continued till August, when he went to Zanesville, Ohio; but his plans not being successful, he returned early the next summer, and in the latter part of the season went once more to New York. He was successively employed in two or three mercantile houses, and having secured the approbation of those in whose service he was engaged, his worldly prospects became flattering. This was a most important period in his life. In that great mart of business there was much to allure the youthful Christian from duty. But upon the busy world with which he was associated—occupied too generally with toils and pleasures—he looked with the sympathies of a follower of Him who came to seek and save the lost. He engaged at once in Christian labors, especially in the Sabbath-school, where he immediately secured the love of both teachers and pupils.

A fellow-teacher, after alluding to his faithfulness and the fitness of his counsels, remarks, "I called for him one Sabbath morning, to accompany me to church, a little before the time of public service. 'Come,' said he, 'go up to my room.' I went, and having closed the door, he said, 'Now, let us pray.' We knelt together, and he invoked God's blessing on us and the whole church of Christ, not forgetting those who were out of the ark of safety." "He was very faithful," says this teacher, "with our Sabbath-school children in our children's meetings, and always spoke of the Sabbath-school as his home."

Mr. D——, another fellow-laborer, his warm friend and constant benefactor, after mentioning his punctual attendance at the school and the prayer-meetings, on the Sabbath and during the week, adds, "In all Sunday-school labors, Charles was untiring, affectionate, interested, and prayerful. His pleadings with the impenitent were characterized by the utmost kindness and affection. They loved him for his faithfulness to their souls. He had their confidence. He would sit down by an impenitent youth, and gain a nearer access to his heart than any teacher in the school, or any person I ever knew. Often did he bring tears into the eyes of members of my class, as he would seize on the moment when they were disengaged, to talk with them of Christ and the value of the soul."

This training in Sabbath-school instruction and active exertion for the souls of men, was a good preparation for the higher sphere to which he was still looking. A life of business in a great city always has its temptations, and the more one can break away from these bonds and engage in doing good, the more may he hope to preserve his soul unspotted from the world, and fasten his heart on God.

Mr. Porter's prospects for business were fair; but, urged by his desire to devote himself to the ministry, he resolved to leave these scenes of commercial life, and engage in studies preparatory for college. "To preach the gospel was the first expressed wish of his heart after his conversion. That it should ever be gratified was the most unlikely thing that could be imagined. His aversion to study, his constitutional activity unfitting him for sedentary habits, and the unreflecting character of his mind, were all unfavorable. And it was not till after a struggle of three years, that he decided to gratify this first desire of his heart."

He had other difficulties also to contend with. How was he to obtain a support? He could expect no miracle to supply his wants. His family were unable to aid him, and he knew not whence the required means might come. The Lord led him on; his kind providence removed the difficulties, supplied his necessities, and blessed his efforts. To him be all the glory.

But we turn now to his own account of the matter in his diary, by which we shall hereafter be guided in tracing his course as a Christian, a student, and a minister of Christ. These extracts should be read as the writings of a simple-hearted child of God, penned without care—a sort of memoranda only, not designed for the eye of others—to refresh his own mind and invigorate his feelings after the toils of the day. Faintly traced, as some of them are by the pencil, nearly effaced, as they have been in some places by the fallen tear, they are yet indelible in the influence they have exerted on his heart and life. God grant they may be so for good to many who read them in these pages. Mr. Porter thus commences his diary:

"The subject of studying for the ministry having had deep hold of my feelings for days, and I may say for weeks, and having prayed and mourned and wept over it to learn my duty, I finally concluded to set apart this 27th day of May, 1833, as one of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, to implore the divine direction and assistance."

He then speaks of his disappointment in the early part of the day, in not having found as much enjoyment as he expected, and laments the deep depravity of his heart. But in the evening he says,

"The Lord has heard my cry, and helped me abundantly. I think I can see pretty clearly my

duty to become a minister of Christ. There are many difficulties to encounter, but may the Lord give me grace to overcome them all. Feel a little fearful lest I may have formed my opinion too hastily, or from some other motive than the glory of God. O for grace to assist me in this mighty work. Eight years before I can become a minister! But I thank the Lord that I can do something for him in that time."

"May 28.—Instead of feeling sorry that I have made up my mind to study for the ministry, I am glad. O let me not suffer my thoughts to turn back; for if my eyes turn from the Sun of righteousness, all becomes dark, and the duty which lies before me looks as if it could never be accomplished; but when I look to Christ it is all bright and glorious."

"May 30.—Have had a most refreshing season. It seems as if Christ was more precious to me than ever. I felt great brokenness of heart, and wept; never had such a thirst for the ministry: it seems as if I could not be denied. Lord, open the way, if it is thy will; give me strength, humility, and perseverance to accomplish the object."

The same earnest desire is frequently mentioned in the days immediately following; and above all, he prayed that God would give him a very humble opinion of himself, and bring him nearer to the feet of his Redeemer.

We next find him inquiring for some place where he might commence his studies. In relation to this question, he remarks, "Finally, cast all my cares on God, and he heard my cry and sent peace into my soul, so that I was enabled to leave all with him. I felt sweetly resigned to his will—to go anywhere, or do any thing, that his name might be glorified—desired to have no will but his."

His parents had arrived in New York, but knowing that their views did not agree with his, he did not mention to them his intention of studying for the ministry, "fearing that it would spoil their visit." This expression evinces a truly delicate regard to the feelings of others. But it was a severe trial of his own feelings, not to be able to open his heart to a beloved father and mother. Could he have poured out the warm promptings of his soul into their bosoms, and found a kindred feeling there, he would no doubt have pressed on his way with a lighter step, and felt the path before him to be comparatively easy.

An incident mentioned in his record of June 8th—another day devoted to fasting and prayer with reference to the object that lay so near his heart—exhibits the manner in which he sought to turn even the most trivial matters to the increase of his own spirituality. He says, "Saw some delicacies on the table, but rejoiced to let them alone and crucify the

flesh, that I might have more of the spirit of Christ; found it very useful, and enjoyed an unusual degree of spiritual life."

"JUNE 9.—Met a friend who is now studying for the ministry: told him of my intention. He said, 'Count the cost.' I told him I trusted I had; and he replied, 'Count it over again.' My heart replied, 'Yes, willingly will I count it over again.' The sacrifices I am obliged to make, and the difficulties I encounter, will only tend, I trust, to my growth in grace, and bring me out as gold that has been tried in the fire."

One of his great trials, as we have seen, was how to meet the expense of his education. He cast himself on the Lord, and was not disappointed. Thus he mentions, the next day, that God had "opened a way" to have his tuition "gratuitous." He expresses some fears with regard to his health, but again commits all to his heavenly Father. He also mentions the fact that he "could not study," and remarks, "When I look at what must be done before I can preach, it makes me shudder." The same day, on beginning his Latin grammar, he writes, "Began, before opening the book for study, by asking God to assist me in the arduous work."

Another difficulty arose from his debts. These, though small, he would have no means of paying after leaving business. On this subject he writes,

"JUNE 12.—The Lord has done wonders for me to-day. The way seems to open as I advance. My dear brother T—— says he will see that my board is provided for, and my debts taken care of; and my employer says he will relinquish all claim to my staying with him: so it seems as if there was nothing to do but to go forward, trusting in the Lord for health and strength, grace and perseverance."

He also says, "After our clerks learned my intention of studying for the ministry, they thought I missed it very much: it was a great pity that after five or six years' preparation for business, I should break off. But so much the more reason have I to be thankful to God for opening the way. Most of the young men who are engaged in business, are unwilling to give it up and labor for the Lord; therefore the work needs every one whom God has inclined to serve him."

Speaking of a public occasion on which crowds were gathered in Broadway, he adds, "Felt as if I was spending the Lord's time unprofitably, and retired for prayer. Let the world with all its pleasures pass onward, but give me Christ."

Mr. Porter's diary everywhere indicates a conscientious purpose to "grow in grace." His exercises in the closet were frequent, and he notices "the comfort," "sweet communion with Christ," "rich blessings," "the preciousness of the Saviour" he

experienced, as evidences to him of his closer walk with God. "Seemed," he says on one occasion, "as if I was not to be a great while on this earth, for my soul took flight, as it were, into higher regions. Language cannot express the happiness I have experienced this day, although it seems as if Satan had been at work with me almost continually." Again,

"JUNE 17.—The Lord has blessed me wonderfully. Fearing that my happiness would be mixed with animal feeling, instead of being true love to Christ, I besought him to search me and try me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Notices like these evince that he was gaining greater knowledge of his own heart, and furnish proof of his conscientiousness as well as of his sound judgment. The same day he says again, "To-day have had a cross to take up; felt that I had a prejudice against a disciple of Jesus; but went and acknowledged my sin to him and to God, and asked and found forgiveness."

The next few days were days of trial and conflict. He made known to his parents his design of studying for the ministry. As he had anticipated, his father did not approve of it, and thought he had better attend to his worldly business. It was a severe trial to Mr. Porter to act contrary to his father's wishes, but he felt it to be his duty to do so. It will be recollected that he was of age, acting for himself,

and dependent on his own exertions; and he believed he had a right to the choice of his employment or profession. He was also exposed to hard conflicts from the ridicule and contempt with which some viewed his determination. Yet he resolved to go forward, counting it a privilege to suffer reproach for the name of Christ.

Spiritual pride also occasioned Mr. Porter many a severe struggle. On this subject we find the following record. "Although I felt afraid that fasting would injure my health, I could not help appointing one day this week, to pray especially that God would make me humble, and break down this accursed I, I, I. It seems as if it would ruin me. O for grace sufficient for my day."

But though the burden of these various trials pressed heavily on him, yet he was not without comfort; and in view of his situation he says again, "I rejoice to be dependent on others for my support, as it leads me to see that I am to live day by day dependent on God, and like the children of Israel in the wilderness, eat the manna that is furnished to-day, and trust in God for to-morrow."

He could not avoid observing the contrast between his situation and that of some with whom he had been associated. He thus says, June 25, in view of the fact that one of his fellow-clerks was to be a partner of the house, "Would I be willing to change

situations with him? By no means. Jesus is sweeter to me than any earthly being; his riches are far superior to any earthly riches; his business to any earthly business; his joys to any earthly joys; his dying tokens which he has left us, to any thing we can find here; his treasure in heaven for all that love him, to any treasure we can lay up on earth. My fellow-clerk will undoubtedly possess riches—earthly I mean, God grant heavenly also—ease, and comfort. I am to be poor and dependent on others, go through a course of eight years' laborious study, and then, should my life be spared, I shall probably be poor all the remainder of my pilgrimage on earth, and find life filled up with trials. Do I envy him? O no. May he be thankful that God has abundantly blessed him. I am and shall be about my Master's business—this is comfort. I have tasted both the world and Christ, and find Christ to be far better. Oh I long to be swallowed up in him—to feel him to be my all in all. Sweet, glorious, holy, happy Saviour, now seated at the right hand of God, thee I love, thee I adore. Give me thy presence, and all other sources of happiness are to me as nothing."

Mr. Porter now closed his engagement as merchant's clerk, and in recording the fact mentions that God inclined his employer to give him in a month's wages. He says that he "had a singular feeling"

when his situation "was about to be given to another person, but not the least desire to retain it."

After a careful examination he fixed on seven hours for sleep, and "resolved on *fast-days*," which he frequently observed. "I will take just food enough," he says, "to keep my body in such a state that my spiritual life shall not suffer, and that I may not appear to men to fast, but to my Father which is in heaven. The rest of my time must be fully taken up in devotional reading, studying, or something for the honor of Christ."

Such was the spirit with which he left New York on a short visit to his parents, at the home of his childhood.

CHAPTER II.

PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE.

At Norwich we find Mr. Porter engaged in numerous labors of Christian love. He visited the poor, the sick, the afflicted, and the inmates of the prison, for religious conversation. He was regular in attending meeting, and often retired at night to the graveyard, or the open field, for meditation and prayer. Instead of losing his spirituality he resolved to live more to the glory of God, cultivating every day a spirit of piety, and renewing his dedication to his Master daily and for life.

Home was very dear to him. His greatest study seems ever to have been how he might best promote the spiritual interests of those whom he there so much loved. Many were the conflicts he had to endure, while he endeavored to discharge his duties faithfully as a son and a servant of Christ.

At times he hoped that God was about to revive his work; and though he had again taken up his Latin grammar, he spent much of his time in visiting from house to house, and his efforts in rousing Christians appear to have been attended with some success. In one case he mentions an attempt to go to Mohegan, where remain several families of that Indian tribe; but as the weather was warm, he

became greatly fatigued when he had walked about half a mile, and was compelled to return. This shows a feebler state of health than his continued labors would indicate. He also mentions his uniting with the Methodist minister in various efforts, and thus exhibits his liberal and catholic spirit. His mind for the most part was in a happy frame, and he was gaining new strength and knowledge of himself. He remained, however, but a short time at his father's, and could not record any decided results as the fruit of his labors.

On Mr. Porter's return to New York, when he may properly be said to have commenced his studies, he was gratified to learn that the Sabbath-school teachers proposed to raise one hundred dollars yearly to aid him in his preparation for the ministry. This he felt to be not only a proof of their esteem, but also an evidence that God meant to provide for him.

His views of the great work to which he had devoted himself were thorough and elevated. He often alludes to the necessity of eminent holiness, and breathes forth many earnest longings for this qualification.

"August 13.—I am studying—for what? O my soul, how canst thou realize the importance of the object in view? A minister of Christ! One who has given himself away, entirely and for ever, to serve

God alone. Thousands of souls, perhaps, are to be saved or destroyed through his preaching. O who can discharge the duties of a minister?" Again he casts himself on God, dedicates himself to him, prays for "a lower place" at his feet, and implores grace to keep him from spiritual pride.

The next day his mouth is filled with praises as he records "the sweetness of a Saviour's dying love," and says, "I have reason to bless God that my studies do not keep me from enjoying religion." He then gives the secret of his strength in this matter. "If a word in my lesson is hard to be understood, I ask God to aid me; and often after having tried a long time to get the signification of a word, upon asking God all has been plain to me. Never let me commence a lesson, or any thing else, without first asking his blessing."

"AUGUST 15.—Remembered that I had taken my food, and the question arose, 'Has the soul been fed this morning as it ought to have been?' Found myself *guilty;* took up the Bible immediately, although Satan as usual suggested my putting it off till after recitations, and dwelt for a few moments on the passage, 'If ye, then, be risen with Christ,' etc."

Visiting the store where he had formerly been employed, Mr. Porter was questioned if he did not repent of his purpose, and wish to return. But he says, "My soul replies, 'Oh no!' I could not bear

the thought, except God should evidently give me to understand by his providence that I am not called to the ministry. My soul loves the work of God better than ever. My desire for the ministry increases daily."

"SEPT. 9.—Never have been so much blessed in my studies as this morning, and I have no doubt it was in answer to prayer. I mean to pray at least three times a day for the special purpose (1) of having my spiritual life kept up from day to day; (2) if God sees it for his glory and my good, that my health may be preserved; and (3) that my studies may be blessed to me."

He found a practical benefit in keeping this resolution, for he records on the 11th and 12th, "God has wonderfully blessed me. Never have proceeded more rapidly in my studies, or had better health than thus far this week. I feel that God has in a peculiar manner blessed my studies." He speaks also of the encouragement he finds as a tract distributer, and seems to have much enjoyment in all his duties.

On the 19th, while reading a passage of Scripture describing the union of Christ's people to him as members of his body, he pours out his soul in words of Christian charity, and says, "Then never let any Christian indulge hard feelings against a brother Christian, since he is a member of the body of Christ.

But let all so love each other, as children of the same parent."

His journal now furnishes repeated evidence of his increased diligence, and tenderness of conscience. An incident exhibiting this latter trait it may be well to mention. Some friend had given him five dollars, and a day or two after, he writes,

"MONDAY, Sept. 30.—Thought somewhat of purchasing a commentary on the New Testament, as I very much needed it; but remembering that I owed my old employer, although he told me I need not be troubled about it, I thought the five dollars belonged to him, and wrote him a note, enclosing the money. I find, when one side is *sure* to be right, and another is *likely* to be right but still doubtful, it is always best to take the sure side. God sent me the money, and who knows but he will send me some commentary to help me along. If he sees it best that I should have it, I am sure it will come; the Lord only knows whence."

Mr. Porter seems to have done what was right in this matter, and to have been blessed in doing it; for he records,

"OCT. 1.—How many friends the Lord has raised up for me! This day I have received a box of books from my dear cousin, M. P., and among them I found Scott's Reference Bible and the five volumes of Dwight's Theology. Wonderful, indeed!" About

three weeks after this, he also received a present of Henry's Commentary on the New Testament, which led him to a resolution to live a more holy life.

These frequent tokens of favor called forth many expressions of gratitude, and caused him anew to feel the obligation to live to God's glory. The next day, with peculiar emphasis, he writes, "*Studied* the Bible with more attention than for some time past. O let me have God in all my studies."

"SUNDAY, Nov. 17.—Visited a family who have lost their head—the husband and father. Endeavored to comfort the widow, and point her to the Saviour, who would be a husband to her and a father to her children. Also visited a poor black man, who we have reason to think is near to death; also a poor colored woman, who fell a few days since and broke three of her ribs. Last Sunday I visited a family who had been deprived of a father and husband; also a colored family, in which was a little boy, who has since died." Such visits were very useful to him, as they kept before him the great end of his life; for he found that his studies had "a tendency to draw away his mind from God."

His Sabbaths appear to have been spent in part with the infant Sabbath-school, where the little ones came to him with tears, asking about eternal things, and begging him to visit them at their home. He speaks of "the awful responsibility" of visiting so

many families, and says again, "Went without dinner, but was abundantly rewarded in visiting the fatherless and the widow."

An incident mentioned January 19, 1834, may be cited as an instance of his boldness and faithfulness in what he conceived to be the discharge of his duty. He says, "Heard two young men swearing behind me as I walked. I turned round, and gently reproved them. They cursed me to my face, and told me to go to hell. I asked them if they believed in a hell. They said yes, and that I would go there. I told them, if I did, I did not want them to go there. They said, I should go to a hypocrite's hell, but they never should. I repeated to them very calmly the commandment, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,' and we parted. May it prove a word in season, sent home by the Holy Spirit."

A pleasing exhibition of Mr. Porter's growing humility occurs on the occasion of his application to the Education Society for aid. He was told, that as he had so many friends, he could probably get along with half a support. He was also cautioned against too high expectations, and these suggestions he received in a truly meek and Christian spirit.

"They told me," he writes, "that I thought too much of myself. Alas, how true it is! But I trust their kind frankness has done me some good. O that all Christians would endeavor to tell each other their

faults. How much more we might grow in grace. Lord, increase my faith; lead me into the valley of humility, near the feet of my Saviour. Let me do just as God directs in every thing, and daily live to his glory."

His next record is filled with complaints of his barrenness of soul. He deplores his pride and coldness, and longs for a more humble spirit. One remarkable instance of this latter trait occurs a day or two after, on the occasion of his receiving a letter from a friend.

"SATURDAY, Feb. 1, 1834.—I received a short letter from my dear brother in Christ, W——. O, what a *good* man, good Christian, good friend! His letter was one which I have needed for a long time. How wonderful, how truly wonderful that it should have been received just at this season! That he should write on the very day that I made the last note in my journal, and tell me exactly what I thought of myself, but what I did not feel as I ought! God saw my waywardness; he saw my horrible, accursed, sinful pride. He knew I did not feel it, and put it into dear brother W——'s heart to tell me of it in a note. O that all my friends would deal thus with me. It is so good, that I will record it all; and may the God of all grace, who loved such a sinful and vile worm as I am, bless it to my soul for all eternity."

"'DEAR BROTHER PORTER—Believe me, you can be of little service to mankind until you imbibe the spirit of a little child. Then you will never seek to be a great man, but a *little* one; and you will pray to be less than the least of all. O, dear brother Porter, you want nothing so much as humility. Pray in faith for this. W.'"

"I am, truly, a *proud* wretch, unworthy to bear the name of *friend*. Help me, dear Saviour, hereafter to live more to thee." He refers from time to time afterwards to the above letter, and always with the same spirit.

Mr. Porter was at this time reading Payson's Memoirs. He admired, and longed to possess Payson's humility; and says, "O, my Saviour, my dear, despised Saviour, can I not learn humility of *thee?* Teach me, O teach me humility. Though my sins rise to the heavens, yet I am not so great a sinner that thy power cannot prevail to bring me into the valley of humiliation. I know I deserve not the least favor from thy hand; but O, for thy own sake, teach me—O teach me the humility of thyself." A toothache with which he was afflicted, leads him to spend in prayer the time which he could not employ in studying; and the burden of his soul is for more holiness, more grace, deeper humility.

He was now about to leave New York, to prose-

cute his studies to greater advantage under experienced teachers, in the academy at Westfield, Massachusetts. From various notices of friends in New York in after-days, he seems to have cherished a pleasant recollection of his labors there, in connection with others, for the benefit of his fellow-men. It was the place where he had decided on preparation for the ministry; and the warm hearts which greeted his purpose with so cheering a response, ever after clung to him, and would not forsake him even amid their own trials and embarrassments. Though he felt that it was a wise course to go elsewhere, yet he could not but feel some lingering regrets at quitting scenes hallowed by so many associations of friendship and kindness.

CHAPTER III.

STUDIES AT WESTFIELD.

THE first entry in his diary at Westfield is dated, "JUNE 5, 1834.—Since writing last, my situation has wonderfully changed. The Lord has sent me here, I trust, to do something, weak as I am, for his great and holy name. O the sweetness of Christ which I have enjoyed for days and weeks past. I trust I have given myself anew to Christ, and come to a more full and settled determination to live to his glory. A number of days since, I made a solemn resolution in the presence of God, that, he assisting me, I would at least twice, and unless extraordinary causes prevented, thrice a day pray myself into a spirit of prayer, however cold I might be; and blessed be God, as yet I have at no time wished to change that resolution. And I trust I have been enabled to keep it; and in keeping it, to retain a spirit of prayer nearly all the time. This morning I experienced the blessed effects of that resolution; for, it being rainy, and my spirit indifferent, I felt backward about going to the throne of grace. But remembering this indifference was one of the most dangerous sides on which the enemy could attack *me*, and calling to mind my promise to God, I went; and O the sweet peace that soon filled my soul! I could say from the

heart, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.'

"JUNE 6.—I find I cannot study with any ease without a spirit of prayer, and bless God for it. O my soul, trust in God. What shall I do without prayer? My lessons, for nine months past, have not been enough prayed over. Never have I had such success as since I made them the continued subject of prayer. May my life be a life of prayer and exertion for the Redeemer. I prayed this morning for humility, and I have reason to bless the Lord that he laid a burden on me which had to be confessed before the school. Thus he has brought me down. And then when I came home, he was kind enough to put it into the heart of a Christian brother to reprove me for talking so much in meeting. So I am taught from day to day to be humble. O that I may diligently improve these admonitions, for I may not always have faithful Christian friends to reprove me."

Mr. Porter appears, at Westfield, to have entered at once on a course of active labor to benefit others. We here somewhat anticipate his dates, that we may give an idea of his labors in this new field. On the Sabbath, he sometimes attended "a prayer-meeting at quarter past four in the morning;" then went, at half past seven, three miles to a Sabbath-school; then attended the morning service at church,

and another Sabbath-school during the intermission; then attended the afternoon service, after which he went three and a half or four miles in a different direction to a Sabbath-school, and then to a prayer-meeting in the evening. In view of all this, he might well remark, "So that every moment seems to be full." Besides this, he was also a distributer of tracts, and visited the poor and afflicted.

He seems to have found great delight in his labor, for he says, "Sabbaths are peculiarly blessed to me. To get out two or three miles from town, into a small school-house or church, and there meet the children joyfully assembled and waiting, O it is sweet. All earth with its vain pleasures would not afford me the satisfaction that I find in teaching those poor children, and in going from house to house, telling them about my beloved Master. In distributing tracts, I find enough to repay me for all that I have done. One woman is anxiously inquiring, and determined to seek salvation. Another seems to feel deeply; and says she has not read her Bible and prayed so much for two years, as since she saw me last month."

Both his heart and his intellect bear marks of the benefit he derived from his present course of education. His mind seems to take a wider range, and the improvement of his style of thought and expression is often quite perceptible. The beauties of nature call

out his admiration, and he derives from all lessons which teach him more of God. He says,

"JUNE 7.—This morning, while sitting at my window and admiring the works of God, my thoughts were fixed upon a leaf, which led to the following reflections: Here is a leaf, perfect in its form, situated just where it is needed, with a beautiful green color, a stem just the size to support it, and the several stronger parts running through the leaf to support its form and regularity. A few weeks ago, where was it? None but God knows. It existed, but in how many different materials I know not. Where they were, I know not. But one thing is certain: whatever or wherever they were, God has brought them together, and formed them into a beautiful thing called a leaf. In looking round upon the tree, I found it covered with these leaves, exactly the same in kind, but not the same in size. God was just forming some of them—*how*, I could not tell, but it was certain he was collecting the materials, arranging them in proper order, putting them together, giving each leaf its proper shape, size, color, taste, and scent; placing just so many upon each stem, and the proper number of stems upon each branch, and the proper number of branches upon each tree; and increasing the body of the tree with branches, stems, and leaves, at the same time. Surely this is work that far excels the work of man.

"Now, thought I, should I begin to count the leaves upon each stem, and then upon all the branches of the tree, where should I end, even with those of the first tree? Then to look around the garden, and see the immense number of leaves; then look a little further to the broad and extensive forests, and behold the multitude of trees, shrubs, and bushes, which contain so many trillions of billions of leaves, and to consider that each one has its peculiar properties, and that one Being alone is doing all this at the same moment, and had in mind before the foundation of the world each distinct leaf, the substance of which it is composed, and the particular time when it should receive its increase, leads me into fields where I am lost in wonder and astonishment. O the greatness, power, wisdom, skill, and goodness of such a Being! Who cannot adore him, who cannot praise him? O the loveliness of God exhibited in his works. O my soul, love, and honor, and adore thy God."

"June 15.—The good Shepherd has been over me to-day. His riches have been poured upon me, and peace like an overflowing river, for a great part of the day, has rested upon me. This morning particularly my heart was stayed upon him. When coming home from the Sabbath-school out of town, and telling my sister of the difficulty of overcoming my pride, she said, 'My dear brother, look to Jesus.

His grace is sufficient.' O how sweet was it to let him have my pride—to give it all to him, and take my place at his feet, a suppliant of redeeming grace. I bless the Lord daily that he has sent me into this part of his vineyard. I can say that the days pass very pleasantly, and I hope profitably."

"JUNE 17.—Lay down in the enjoyment of God; believe I dreamed about him all night, and awoke in the presence of Jesus. How sweet to have God with us. I long for more conformity to him. It shall be my aim, in the strength of Jesus, to advance more than I have done in the attainment of holiness. Dear Saviour, here I am; take me, make me holy; carry me through any affliction, trouble, or trial; only I beg of thee grace sufficient to profit by that discipline."

He also alludes to the persecution endured by an acquaintance, and speaks of praying for her. This and similar notices throughout his diary, show that he was often in the habit of particularly remembering, at the throne of grace, the friends in whose trials he sympathized.

"JUNE 19.—Never have I realized and looked forward to the privilege of rising early in the morning to serve God, as I do at the present time. Although I rise at four o'clock and engage in worship, yet it looks pleasant in prospect; and to-morrow, blessed be God, I have appointed as a day of fasting,

that Christ may advance the interests of religion in my soul. May it be my anxious desire to do something directly for Christ every day. Cannot I find some poor sinner, and perhaps a number every day, to whom I may recommend Jesus? O, dear and blessed Saviour, give me more of thy spirit; give me more wisdom, more humility, more love for thee and for dying sinners; and may I be still more anxious to do them good. Why, O why should they die? O my Saviour, must they die? Wilt thou not use me to present thyself to them in such a manner that they may be led to seek thee? Here, Lord, am I; send me, not for myself, but for thee and for them."

"JUNE 22.—I have heard from a number of sources that I am doing too much. 'I shall ruin my health, shall become crazy,' etc. O how strange that one can do nothing for Christ without being thought crazy. If I were to do ten times as much for myself as I do for Jesus Christ, people would think it right enough. I know there is danger, and I hope sincerely that instead of pulling me down, they will try to build me up by their prayers and exertions. It seems to me that I should wear out ten times as quick, seeing Christians sleeping at their posts, and sinners calmly going down to hell, as from seeing them all alive to Christ and his cause. I desire and pray that the Lord may keep me from growing cold

in his cause; and that he may, if consistent, preserve my health and give success to my studies. O may I be kept from every false doctrine, error, and sin, and live consistently and to his glory."

That Mr. Porter did not err wilfully, even if he sometimes regarded not as he should have done his health and his situation as a student, is clear from his readiness, as above seen, to notice every thing of this kind, and make it the subject of serious reflection. His mind was now constantly active in devising some way to attain his great object of saving souls. Thus he mentions the following somewhat singular plan, and yet one which evinces the true spirit of a child of God.

"JUNE 24.—I thought this morning of a good way to make friends. If a neighbor is sick and needs watchers, let me go to one of that man's enemies, or one whom he dislikes, especially if he be a Christian, and ask him to improve the opportunity of showing his friendship by offering to watch, and by doing every little thing he can to assist the sick man and his family. He would thus put them to shame, and if they had any honesty they would confess and have the wound healed."

A Christian friend having called to make some arrangements for tract distribution at an hour when he was engaged in private devotion, he alludes in his journal to the reluctance with which he left com-

munion with the Saviour, though it was to confer with a friend, and on a subject especially congenial to his feelings.

For the next few days he seems to have suffered dejection of spirit. Having set himself to trace the cause, he says,

"Going down to bathe with a Christian brother a few days since, I talked about other things far more than about Christ. Thus the Spirit was grieved. Another thing was pride. I do not prepare so many lessons for recitation as the rest do, but I study my grammar at home, which is more necessary for me at present than any thing else. They must conclude that I do not study much, and this thought tries me. But I will do what is best as far as I can see; and if I have the appearance of being neglectful, I will endeavor to keep my conscience clear in the sight of God, and subdue my pride.

"Another thing. I have been praying that my burden might be *removed*, rather than that it might be *sanctified*. I have been impatient, not trusting enough in the fulness of God. I have been too much troubled about worldly concerns, not remembering that God will provide for me. I desire to rejoice, though with trembling, that I can cast my care upon Christ, resolving to do my duty and leave results with him. Let me ever cultivate such a spirit, that in times of trial I may look up and say,

in love and resignation, 'It is my Father. Do just as thou seest best.'"

Other portions of Mr. Porter's diary evince his desire for the spiritual welfare of his friends, who, he feared, were in the belief of dangerous errors. They could not feel that he was right in his unwearied efforts, and ascribed to enthusiasm what he felt to be obedience to the calls of the Holy Spirit. His soul yearned over them. He wept and prayed for them, and longed that they should taste the same heavenly grace, and act under the control of the same divine Spirit, that he hoped was guiding him. Under one date he mentions the faithfulness of a Christian friend in reproving him for some failings, and desires to profit by the rebuke.

The cause of home missions about this time engaged his attention, and he speaks of becoming a missionary in some destitute part of our own country. He says his prevailing desire is hereafter "to labor among the vast growing settlements on our western borders." This is the first distinct mention in his diary of a purpose he afterwards more fully cherished, but which he did not live to execute.

"WEDNESDAY, July 23.—Have been much blessed of late in my studies, owing to particular prayer for that purpose—asking God to give me an inquiring, patient spirit, that I might calmly look into the intricacies and anomalies of the languages, and a

persevering spirit, that I might overcome difficulties—not to show my knowledge, but to contribute to my usefulness. Sweet, passing sweet have been my seasons with Jesus at times, and at others my soul has been clogged. But generally my path grows bright. O thou Searcher of hearts, assist me to do thy will."

"SEPT. 25.—Some precious seasons I have had; but alas, my heart, from time to time, has wandered from God."

"SEPT. 27.—I am but a babe. I hope I have been a Christian almost five years, but feel that I have made little progress. O my leanness, my barrenness! My example, what has it been? I shudder to look back on it. I will endeavor to pray more over my example, that it may be such as to carry conviction to those around me that I am born of God. I am prone to levity. Deliver me, O God, from every appearance of evil."

"SEPT. 28.—Resolved to lean more simply on Christ. I learn slowly; but a dull scholar makes a good one, if he is attentive and has Christ for a teacher."

On the 4th of November, one of his days of fasting and prayer, he says, "Five years this day since I was converted." He testifies anew to the goodness of God, mourns that he has not served him better, and casts himself once more on his Saviour for mercy and grace.

"Nov. 15.—Heard last evening of a man who had broken his leg. Went to visit him, and found a blessing by so doing. May I never forget that 'pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world.'"

Mr. Porter's record is here broken for some months, from the last date up to the 20th of March, 1835. On resuming it, he mentions that he had not continued it because he was absent at New Hartford, teaching a school, and did not take his book with him. He says, "My feelings have been various. The first part of the time I was not half as much awake as I ought to have been; but in the latter part God poured out his Spirit, and I felt more like laboring for him, and tried to do my duty. But I had to leave my dear scholars without an interest in the Saviour, except those who were pious before I went there."

Learning afterwards that one of these scholars had been hopefully converted, and then another, he rejoiced much, and was again encouraged. A day or two after, he writes,

"Nov. 25.—Some men lay out their strength for money; God gives them money: some for honor; God gives it them. Others lay it out for learning; they possess it. And shall not I lay out mine for

souls, and expect God will give them to me? Yes, in his strength will I try hereafter to lay myself out with the expectation that God will make me useful as a means of converting sinners. Let me expect it as much as the laborer expects his wages."

"April 2.—Find that much talking, if it is not on practical godliness, injures the spirit. More determined to 'search the Scriptures.'"

A letter dated at Westfield in April, addressed to his mother, with a single entry in his diary, is all the further information we have respecting him, till we find him the next autumn a member of Yale College. In this letter he speaks of having been at Norwich, and of spending a few days at Springfield, where there was a revival of religion, and says, "It was refreshing to my soul to get where God had poured out his Spirit; and it brought forcibly to mind my great unfaithfulness, *particularly at home*. It is *there* that I ought to be faithful. But alas, I am not. When I go home, instead of acting like a Christian, I acknowledge with shame that I act as formerly. I know that I am more consistent anywhere else than at home. Did I know of any way to present the truth, so that it might have a saving influence on my dear friends, I believe I should do it. I do know there is something in religion to which all are strangers but those who experience it.

"We have had happy times here; some professors

seem to act as they ought, and God has converted a number of sinners. My enjoyment has been sweet and heavenly. Peace, not that which the world giveth, has flowed into my soul like a river. There is a blessed reality in religion which I long to have you all experience."

He then alludes to some aid unexpectedly received from his brother, and to the goodness of God in conducting him on; and repeats the declaration he had often before made, that nothing earthly could tempt him to relinquish the object he had in view, of preparing to serve the Lord as a minister of his blessed gospel.

His record, on the 5th of May, is quite characteristic. "What a blessing to be reproved. I thank God he has given me a few faithful friends. My labors have been blessed this term more than ever, and God has given me a number of souls, one of whom came to me this afternoon, and wanted me to try to be more tender when talking to the impenitent. I felt that it was like oil poured into my soul. God has to lay on the rod often, to keep me at his footstool. Every time he blesses my labors particularly, he has to give me the rod to keep me from going out of my place. Blessed God, wilt thou ever keep me down and glorify thyself."

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST TWO YEARS IN COLLEGE.

In a letter to his friend D——, dated, Yale College, October 7, 1835, Mr. Porter thus speaks respecting the commencement of his collegiate life.

"As yet I am much more pleased than I expected to be; but I am fearful lest the blighting influences of a college life should lead my soul astray from God. I feel that prayer is indispensable, and hope that I shall ever persevere in a faithful discharge of *private* as well as public Christian duties. Many things are new, and calculated, unless one is on the watch, to draw off the heart from God. Many come here warm, I am told, but go away cold. That God may preserve the little spark which I have, that it may shine brightly, is my earnest prayer. I have not yet taken a class in the Sabbath-school, but hope to have a Bible class before long. On Tuesday evening we hold a prayer-meeting of our class, and on Friday evening there is a general one for all the classes. Our class is large, and many of its members are wild, but I hope there is salt enough in it to preserve it. We need great wisdom and grace to maintain that holy walk which alone will be acceptable to God and preserve our character spotless.

"I am so favored as to be permitted to room out.

My room-mate is one of the best young men I have ever met; he was a class-mate in Westfield for about six months, and I doubt not he was there the means of converting a number of souls. He is studying for the ministry." He mentions that they board themselves, and says, "We frequently have crackers and water for *breakfast*, crackers and water for *dinner*, and crackers and water for *supper*, and not unfrequently a dessert of apples and pears. We have also cheese on the table, and sometimes cookies; so that you see our *dainties*, if not ourselves, would almost induce you to come and dine. Living in this way, our board probably costs about seventy-five cents per week."

Mr. Porter's diary is now written at longer intervals, indicating that his time was very much occupied in severe study. He was engaged as usual in Sabbath-school instruction; for a time in the city, and then at Westville, two or three miles distant.

His record of his collegiate life opens November 15, 1835, with complaints of the hardness of his heart. During the absence of his room-mate he improves the opportunity of being alone in prayer. He says, "I knelt and attempted to pray, but could not. My heart was hard, and I could not even shed a tear in sorrow that it was so. I concluded that if there was any blessing to be received from God, he would wait until he saw I was in earnest before he granted

it. I gave up all idea of doing any thing else until my heart was right. I wanted to pray for my Sabbath-school class, but felt that I could not pray acceptably with that state of feeling. I told God just how I felt, and how little I had loved him, and asked and plead for a blessing. But a few minutes passed before he came in mercy. He showed me the vileness of my heart. It seemed as if hell had hold of me, to draw me off from God: pride appeared even in my tears, and I was constrained to feel that I was *vile, awfully* so."

Dec. 27.—"Sabbath evening. This day I have had an overflowing heart. When I looked around upon the world, and saw that every one of its inhabitants was by nature alienated from God, and by practice sunk in the depths of iniquity—when I reflected upon the poor heathen sinking by millions to the chambers of eternal death, my heart seemed to break, and tears streamed from my eyes. To see my fellow-beings sunk deep in guilt, and exposed to the eternal wrath of God, was too much. Oh, my God, wilt thou not convert this dying world to thyself? Felt a peculiar anxiety for an impenitent class-mate; wrestled in prayer for him, resolved to go and see him, and endeavor with God's assistance to direct him to Christ."

The next entry, February, 1836, speaks of a more encouraging aspect of things in college, and remarks

that brethren had begun to plead the promises, and "exert themselves in favor of Zion." He adds, "Had a soul-refreshing season with God this evening. Oh, what a privilege it is to be alone with God. I have felt greatly the need of a place where I could enjoy that privilege since I have had a room-mate, yet I know not but the daily benefit I receive will compensate me. For there are many little things occurring from day to day, and from week to week, about which we differ, and sometimes, perhaps, we should indulge hard feelings were it not for grace. Here is a great deficiency in my character, which I was not aware of until it was put to the test. I find that the moral feelings may be cultivated very much more with respect to little things, which constitute much of human life, by having a room-mate; but with respect to private devotion, it is far better to room alone."

Mr. Porter's mind was again dwelling on the subject of missions, to which he seems more resolved to consecrate himself. He says, "The subject of missions has been for some time on my mind. May God direct me to go wherever he pleases, if my life is spared."

"May 3.—As I saw that it sprinkled, I was led to reflect what an admirable harmony there is in all God's works. I know not that I ever thought before why we need *little showers frequently* during

the day, from the latter part of April to the latter part of May, more than at any other time of the year. Yet the reason is very evident, and doubtless others who have been more careful than I to mark how God designs every thing for his own glory and our good, have observed it. At this season of the year every thing in nature is in its infancy. The spears of grass and the plants have but just taken root, and they need to be watered often, and to have the genial rays of the sun as often; for if it should not rain oftener than at other seasons of the year, the soil would become dry farther than their roots extend, and the consequence would be that they must perish; and at this season hot sunshine without rain might produce a general famine. Or on the other hand, if we had rain as copiously and as long as at other seasons, they would perhaps be exposed to mould. Thus our heavenly Father takes care of nature in its infancy, by frequently visiting it with gentle showers from heaven, and bestowing upon it, at short intervals, the genial rays of the sun."

"May 6.—My soul has for a long time been a desert. It has been far away from my Redeemer. Resolved to spend more of each day during the vacation in striving to grow in grace. Part of it has passed, and I have neglected it; but this morning I had a sweet season of prayer, on a retired hill in West Haven. I hope to spend the remainder of my

vacation profitably, and be prepared to do good in college during the summer term. Expect to leave for New York to-day, and I pray God to be with me."

It is probable that he spent the anniversary week in New York, and the rest of his vacation in Norwich. In a letter dated, Yale College, May 23, addressed to his father, he says,

"I feel about prepared to enter again upon my studies, after having spent for the most part a pleasant vacation, though I should be pleased to have spent more of it at home. I feel ashamed to think I have done no more good there. I have been less active in the cause of Christ at Norwich than anywhere else. I hope hereafter it will not be so. I am glad persons have the Bible to teach them what religion really is, for if my friends at Norwich should judge of religion by my life, I fear they would never become pious. You are not afraid to speak and act on political subjects, to hold meetings, and do any thing that is honorable to secure the end proposed. And why should I be afraid to speak, and act too, as if I am in earnest? Why should I be backward in using means for the conversion of souls? If ever I am successful in winning souls to Christ, I know I must disregard the opinion of those who know not what it is to be born again, and to be 'filled with the Spirit.' They perhaps think religion of little importance, and act accordingly. Our conduct must

be widely different. I hope to be more faithful in future, and not a stumbling-block to those who have not 'tasted of the water of life.' O what a glorious sight, could I come home next spring and see all our dear family converted to Christ, and living for eternity. Love to all from your affectionate son,

"CHARLES."

"SABBATH MORNING, June 12, 1836.—God has been precious to me this morning. In studying my Sabbath-school lesson, while referring to passages of Scripture, I met this: 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' While reflecting upon it, the fire in my heart burned, and my spirit was broken. Precious gospel; more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold."

"MONDAY, Aug. 8.—This day I begin the 26th year of my life. O how rapidly time flies. A few days and I shall be no more. Others will fill my place, and I be forgotten among the children of men. What could man do without the hope of immortality and of knowing something hereafter, especially of the love of God? Set apart this as a day of fasting and prayer. May it be profitable." This appears to have been his usual practice on every birthday.

On commencing his second year in college, Mr. Porter writes thus in his diary:

"OCT. 9, 1836.—During the vacation I found my soul greatly blessed. Perhaps it was because I did

not have to confine my devotions to a particular length of time. While I was at home I came to a decision with respect to becoming a missionary. It has been on my mind for months, but I fear that I have not enough made it a subject of prayer. I fear also that I resolved to go from wrong motives. I do not feel fit to be a missionary, but may the Lord prepare me. I have as yet no desire to change my purpose. From the moment I placed my name on the card, I felt a peace of mind as to this subject which I had not felt before. My not being decided on this point, may have been the very reason why I have no more grown in grace. Since that time I can truly say that I believe my path to have been upward. The latter part of the vacation I spent in my beloved Westfield."

He mentions the sickness and death of several friends in that place; speaks with great earnestness and tender affection of those he loved, praying that he may know his duty with respect to them, and alludes to the trial he was to meet in declaring his resolution to be a missionary. He had reason to suppose that his mother would scarcely acquiesce in its propriety, and says, "I have not yet told her my decision, because I do not wish to wound her feelings so long before the time."

"Oct. 13.—This day has been greatly blessed to my soul. When reading the 20th chapter of John

this morning, I was surprised and delighted. Never before do I recollect having my heart opened to drink in God's word so abundantly. Never before did I see such exceeding richness in it. I was astonished to think I had read the same passage so many times, and yet never seen its beauty—its exceeding loveliness. How true it is, that 'the natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit.' Neither do Christians always; for alas, how often it is a book opened too much from duty and not from hearty love. I was delighted to discover its richness, and hope hereafter my heart will always be in a proper state. It is a rich feast to spend half an hour alone with God, and if I could have only this during the day, I ought to be willing to toil hard all the rest of the day for it. But blessed, blessed be God, I can take an hour and a half every day, and often much more for this purpose. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Although I am not as fond of study as of prayer, yet if the Lord lets me have a place and time in which I can commune with him without distraction, I am willing to study or do any thing else which he assigns me. May I remember that it is for his sake I study."

"Oct. 25.—I have enjoyed more the presence of God thus far the present term, than for a long time. Many precious seasons have I had. But I am especially grieved this evening that I so often offend my Saviour. Alas, how feeble is man. I go astray

like a foolish child. I have sweet seasons with God, and then go out and any one would think that he was farthest from my thoughts. Alas, alas, when shall I be like God? O for a baptism of the Holy Ghost."

"DEC. 6.—My soul is exceedingly vexed with *pride*—always panting after earthly honors. Yet my blessed God has seen fit to give me *no honors* among men. Blessed be his name, he knew I had not humility enough to receive them without pride. O, if I can but be contented, yea, rejoiced to have one take the palm in composition, and another in the languages. Yea, let the honors be distributed all about me, only let me be a *little* one, dressed in a garment of humility, and seated in some retired corner, out of sight, but feasting on my Saviour's love; let me but be crowned by him, then shall I be happy. Take, my friends, these earthly honors; may they do you good: give me the approbation of my Master. I bless God he has made others better *men*, better *scholars*, than myself. May I therefore learn humility."

Under date of February 5, Mr. Porter, after speaking of having neglected his diary, and resolving to write in it at least once a week, says,

"In the vacation I have reason to hope that God blessed his word. Since the term commenced I have heard of the conversion of my elder sister, for which praised be his holy name. It has shown me my

utter want of faith, and I hope thrown me more upon Christ." He also mentions the conversion of a member of his Bible class, and speaks of a public fast and renewal of the covenant by the churches of the city, and of some cases of hopeful turning to God there, as well as of revivals of religion elsewhere. In these scenes he mingled with joy, and declares, "Never have I felt more my own nothingness and unfitness to labor for God."

The next day Mr. Porter complains, "Find my feelings vary too much with outward circumstances. Have been led to doubt whether I ever possessed true love to God. A kind of sluggishness has crept over my soul."

This is the first intimation in his diary of his having a doubt respecting his interest in Christ. With all the variations of his feelings he still trusted in him. The happiness he found in his service led him to feel that he ought not to doubt that he was a child of God, though he often mourned his coming short in duty.

Alluding to the monthly concert of prayer, he further says, "Have felt for a year past much interest for Canada. That may yet be the field to which my Saviour would have me go." We have here an intimation of a feeling which we find afterwards strengthening, and leading him to one of his most successful fields of labor.

He was now in the practice of going out occasionally to some of the villages near New Haven, and attending a meeting in the evening, and sometimes on the Sabbath. Referring to an invitation to engage in such labor, he says, "Was requested yesterday to attend a meeting at West Haven, but felt that it would not be right to leave my studies, though nothing would have more accorded with my feelings, had duty directed me to go. Have felt a deeper interest in college of late."

"Saturday Evening, February 12.—God is evidently in the city. There have been several conversions the past week. The work exceedingly still: no noise, bustle, or excitement. Went over my lesson as speedily as possible, that I might go and see a member of my Bible class. Found a great change in her feelings, and hope it has been wrought of God."

Alluding to the expulsion of a class-mate for vicious conduct, he says, "Could not but contrast his situation with mine, and ask, Who hath made us to differ? Prayed that it might be the means of leading him to Christ."

"Spent more than three-quarters of an hour in prayer this evening for a broken and contrite heart; did not obtain it, but feel determined not to rest till I do."

The 23d of February was observed as the annual

day of fasting and prayer for colleges. This day is a most important one in those institutions where it is observed. A special blessing seems to attend it. It appears as if the hearts of mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and friends, breaking as it were and flowing together, were drawn out in wrestling urgency for the sons and brothers and loved relatives they have sent forth from the hallowed circle of home to the various seats of learning. The youth themselves cannot but feel it. Not a few, from time to time, refer their first serious impressions while in college to this day. Mr. Porter, alluding to it the next day, says,

"Yesterday was greatly blessed: deep searchings of soul seem to have been its prevailing characteristics; especially was it so with me. Scarcely ever has my soul been more searched."

The notices in Mr. Porter's diary are now more infrequent. He blames himself for not keeping up his resolution of entering a record at least once a week; but probably he was much occupied, both in his studies and his labors in the revival, which he alludes to as one of much power, resulting in numerous conversions, some of them quite remarkable. He notices the return of the day in which he first united with the church of Christ, and speaks of a conversation with a class-mate, now deceased, the first in his class in literary standing, and says, though he detained him from tea unintentionally, yet "he re-

marked to me that my conversation was so profitable, he did not wish to interrupt it. He seemed to say it from the heart. O that I may be the means of winning his heart to Christ. I have had several serious conversations with him."

"MARCH 16.—Felt somewhat encouraged with regard to my studies. Have had to study very hard Wednesday afternoons and evenings"—usually seasons for recreation and meetings of societies—"at which my heart revolted. Did it because I thought it duty." "Can perceive a great improvement in my studies, though I have to toil for it. But I am convinced that much of the discipline which I need will be lost unless I learn to *conquer*. May the Lord prepare me by hard labor for any station in which my Redeemer shall be pleased to place me. May he keep me from ambitious motives. I fear they are too much intermingled with others, and that the love of the praise of man will exert too great an influence over me."

He mentions, about this time, that he had relinquished his Bible class in the city, and taken upon himself the superintendence of the Sabbath-school at Westville.

There is no intimation where he spent the spring vacation, but we find him again, in the summer term, entered on the severest studies of the second year in college.

CHAPTER V.

EFFORTS TO DO GOOD.

During the earlier part of his college course, Mr. Porter had been in a great degree free from pecuniary want; at least, scarcely the mention of such need appears among his papers, from the time of his leaving New York for Westfield. But the year 1837, as is well known, was a year of great pecuniary embarrassments in our country, and it was to be expected he would feel the pressure of the times. As early as June of this year, we find intimations to this effect. Thus he says,

"Met with some disappointments with regard to pecuniary concerns, but if my heavenly Father would have me continue in college he will provide the means." Again: "Pecuniary means have been unexpectedly provided. Received a letter a few days since, saying that I must by no means leave college. That my friends preferred to retrench their private expenses, that the necessary amount might be made up for me. A friend has made a liberal donation, to be called for when I please. Thus, my heavenly Father provides, in ways unseen by me."

It shows the strong hold Mr. Porter had on the sympathies and affections of those kind friends, and the expectations which they felt they might reason-

ably cherish of his future usefulness, that at such a period they preferred to make sacrifices of their own comfort rather than that he should not go forward in his studies. In allusion to his dependent situation, and the kindness he received, he says,

"Find it a great advantage to be poor. It affords God's people a channel for their benevolence, thus making them happy. Have been forcibly struck with this fact in relation to the people of Westville. For some time they did not know my circumstances; they feared to offer me aid lest my pride might be wounded. But by inquiry they found out my situation, and now seem very desirous to assist in giving me an education. When one source is cut off, another seems at once to open. He has given me many warm friends at Westville."

Mr. Porter's vacation, previous to the commencement of his junior year in college, was partly spent in Norwich. The only notice we have during this interval, is in some extracts from a letter to his friend D——, of New York. It is dated, Norwich, September 1, 1837. In answer to a request that he would call on a friend, he says,

"On your account I may. I never allow the pleasure of visiting to interfere with more important duties." Again: "I am thankful that the *hardest* part of my whole course of study is *through*, I think I may with safety say, *well through*."

He acknowledges a kind donation of clothing which he had received during the past summer, of which he retained such articles as he needed, and says, "Disposed to one and another of almost all the remainder, and thus saved many a dollar for a poor student, which in these times I can assure you came not amiss."

Alluding to the case of a young friend, who still continued unconverted after having been some time under conviction, he suggests the effort to "throw her upon the sovereignty of God," and remarks, "Perhaps it might lead her to her Saviour. But after all, how feeble is human instrumentality. We may talk and talk for ever, but without God's blessing it avails nothing. My dear brother, if we would win men to Christ we must be more in prayer. We must water our couch with tears, and our hearts must yearn with humble, holy ardor for the salvation of souls. Humility, brother, profound humility before the great and holy God, is what is needed by us.

"I am glad to hear that your Sabbath-school prospers; but *take care*, brother. The devil is always ready to puff up with pride those who try to do good. Let every successful effort humble you in the dust, and make you feel your own unworthiness that God should bestow such high favor on a worm of the dust, a poor lost sinner—lost for ever without

the saving arm of the blessed Redeemer, which has plucked you as a brand from the burning."

Mr. Porter's first entry in his diary, in his Junior year, bears date Oct. 4. "Was sick about a third of the vacation. Health entirely recovered. Had a melting season on the Friday fast, in the vacation, alone in the woods. Hope to devote this year to God more entirely than any hitherto."

"Oct. 25.—I long for the time to come when I shall not be chained down to study. Though I have become fond of it, I wish to spend more time in doing good. But I must learn neither to neglect study nor the cause of God."

"Oct. 27.—I hope it may never be said of me, 'Since he has been to college he has lost his piety.' But, blessed Redeemer, may I continually grow in grace, and may my last two years in college be by far my best."

He mentions on one occasion, November 2, having spent an hour and a half or three-quarters mostly in prayer. "I felt," he says, "that Jesus was near me the unworthy, and my eyes flowed freely. O that such seasons may lead me near to my God. I feel that I have been peculiarly blessed thus far another year. I have prayed and still pray that it may be more devoted to God than any preceding year. O that I might grow in grace, advance from day to day, and month to month, and year to year,

until this perishing body shall decay. O my God, my Saviour, do thou sanctify me wholly, that I may reflect the image of my dear Redeemer in all my ways. I feel the need of greater humility, and an eye single to God's glory." He also remarks, "I feel my need of *perseverance*, though my friends seem to think that I possess it."

"Dec. 11.—My leanness, my leanness. Though God has poured upon me the greatest temporal blessings, yet my soul seems to be blighted. Perhaps I have too much concern as to where I shall go to preach. But why be concerned? If God sees fit, he will send me forth when I am ready. Let me, therefore, leave all with him."

In a letter to his friend and correspondent, Mr. D—— of New York, December 21, Mr. Porter says,

"One-third of the Junior year is passed; soon, very soon shall I take my farewell of these literary walls, and enter on my theological course. Four years and a half since I commenced my studies! Who can realize it? How wonderfully hath the Lord dealt with me. My health, about which so many fears were expressed at the commencement of my course, has been all the time good, except two or three short periods of illness; and I have prospered in my studies beyond my expectation. My religious feelings since I began to study have been variable. Sometimes I have walked in the light,

and at others groped in darkness, though I sincerely pray that a college life may not leave me with less piety than at my entrance upon it. With regard to pecuniary concerns the Lord hath dealt bountifully with me. I have thus far been provided for, though when I left my business I could not see a week before me. I knew not how I could get along, and yet you see my absolute wants have been supplied. I have never *really suffered*, though many times I have *needed* what I did not possess."

"Dec. 27.—Saw a new tribute to James B. Taylor, and having read the preface, purchased it, believing that those who assist me would not think that lost or wasted which tends to fit me to be a better minister of Jesus Christ. The term has almost closed. We have had our election for appointments. My division have ranked me in the first third in science, but not in literature. Whether the faculty will honor me with an appointment I know not, and feel no concern; if I fear on either side, it is that they will rank me higher than I deserve. But though not a good scholar, I bless God that I can nevertheless be a good man, and, with his blessing, do much good."

He spent his vacation in Terrysville, a manufacturing village in the town of Plymouth, Connecticut. Though he was a stranger, his labors here were greatly blessed. Soon after he arrived, a church was

formed and meetings were commenced. With few exceptions he found professing Christians cold, and says, "Prospects for usefulness during vacation are rather discouraging." For his own benefit he commenced reading Pilgrim's Progress, and learning the references. He also began a system of visits to families, entering into personal conversation with each member, and was enabled to do much good. A revival of religion, evidently the work of the Spirit of God, commenced; the church was roused, and some ten or more persons were soon inquiring the way to eternal life.

Mr. Porter employed his mornings in study, and his afternoons in visiting. In the evening meetings were held, and also on the Sabbath; they were generally well filled, and sometimes crowded with attentive and weeping hearers. Soon one and another were indulging hope in Christ.

He early won his way to the hearts of the people, and they appear to have had a great desire that he should spend some weeks with them. The vacation, however, continued but two weeks, and his duty required him to return to college. The trial of his feelings in respect to leaving them, is described in the following extracts from his diary:

"Jan. 16.—Evening. Have been visiting all day and bidding the people farewell. Astonished to find that almost every family feel as if *I must not go.*

Had a very sweet time, and a broken heart, while at prayer in a poor widow's house. Find that there is an almost universal seriousness. Christians feel much more than they did, but they need more brokenness of spirit. More or less impenitent sinners in almost every house feel for their souls."

"JAN. 17.—Last evening I gave the people my farewell. The house was full almost to overflowing; it was the most solemn meeting we have had. At one time I should think half the congregation were in tears. Some in the course of the evening sobbed aloud. Some anxious ones remained, and four or five young converts. After a meeting of the committee of the church, they wished to know if it was a possible thing for me to stay over the Sabbath. They said that on Monday they would see me home." He determined that it was his duty to remain. "Indeed," he says, "I hardly should dare to go away without some one to enter in who could put in the sickle."

"Afternoon. Found Mrs. B——, the wife of a Universalist, hoping that she had made her peace with God. A young man also feels determined to live henceforward for Christ. He is about eighteen years old, and I hope will exert a happy influence. Another, a young lady, feels willing to give up all for Christ, and seems fully decided to live for his glory. Another youth too gives some evidence of a change."

"JAN. 19.—Last evening, though the walking was bad, the house was well filled. Some came two or three miles. I addressed them from the words, 'Will a man rob God?' I endeavored to show them that they had robbed Him of the service of their minds, of the proper exercise of their affections, of their property, time, thoughts, and conversation. After I had finished, a young man who was a member of some church, but not known here as such, and who had been a leader in profaneness and iniquity, rose and confessed himself a robber of God. He then asked forgiveness of God and of all his young friends, and told them he intended to devote himself to the service of Christ. All were surprised, and it is to be hoped that it may have a happy effect. Several lingered after the meeting to converse on the subject. O God, prepare me for this work. I feel ignorant what to do, as I have had no experience in such labors. Wilt thou teach me, and then I shall be guided in wisdom's ways.

"JAN. 20.—Full meeting this evening, although they have prepared seats to accommodate fifty more. God seems to be powerfully at work. Quite a number of young men, I know not how many, have come out for Christ within a day or two. Deep seriousness reigns throughout; even the most hardened are thoughtful, and several of the most profane leaders in wickedness have laid down the weapons of their

rebellion. One of them came after the meeting, grasped my hand, and with tears thanked me again and again for my faithfulness to him. It seemed as if he could not express enough, but I directed him to Christ, feeling, I believe in truth, that not unto me but unto His name must be all the glory."

"JAN. 21.—Sabbath. House full to overflowing all day. Some suppose that more than three hundred were present. The Spirit of the Lord seems to work with a mighty energy. I never before saw such a work of grace in so short a time. More than fifty stayed to converse. The Lord only knows how many have given their hearts to Jesus."

At this time Mr. Porter applied to the president of the college, for leave to remain a little longer in the prosecution of this important work; and having obtained it, he continued there until another laborer arrived.

"JAN. 23.—Spoke last evening with reference to false hopes. Never felt so much need of the teachings of the Spirit; find that God is blessing my soul richly, and not only mine but many others. This evening the meeting was very full. Many are rejoicing; one, who was determined he would not be a Christian, has meekly bowed to the truth."

"JAN. 25.—Find that my discourse on false hopes cut off many, threw many into deep darkness, almost despondency, and made others more estab-

lished. These trials will not hurt them, if they are truly pious. Told them plainly, that I had much rather they would at once throw away their hopes, if they were not sound, than to keep them until they were taken into the church, and then slide back into the world, like many ungodly professors at the present day.

"Just heard of the conversion of a young lady who laughed at the conversation which I had with her some days since. It appears that for about a week she has been under conviction. It has been deep of late, so much so that she almost despaired of mercy. She felt as if she was the worst of all, and had almost resolved to seek no longer. She came to the meeting; the light broke in upon her soul, and when she went home, she went with Jesus as her friend. The woman with whom she lives says she is entirely changed. She is humble, teachable, and rejoices with trembling, lest her heart should, after all, prove to have deceived her. The same woman told me that she said I appeared to her almost an angel. It grieved me that she should know no more of the human heart than to tell it to me. I find difficulty enough in keeping the flames of pride from burning up my piety, without any additional fuel. I had to rebuke the good sister, almost with severity, telling her plainly she was unintentionally aiming a death-blow at my future usefulness. Oh, that all would

learn a lesson of Jesus; then they would think less of the creature, and more of the Creator."

"JAN. 26.—Spent almost all day in literally praying out a discourse from these words, 'Oh, do not this abominable thing which I hate.' Never before felt so willing to be nothing, that God may be all in all." Of the delivery of this discourse, he says, "Never in my life was I so buried and lost in my subject. Before I was through, I believe I may say, in truth, the whole congregation were in tears."

He records the following rules for his future action in vacations: "Wherever I go,

"1. Visit the people, and get every family interested in me as an individual.

"2. Not propose meetings myself. Let the people get hungry for them before they commence, and then not have them too frequently.

"3. Let me be anxious rather to tear away false hopes than to get people to hope. The conversion of a few persons that will honor the cause all their lives, is much more for the interest of Christ's kingdom, than of many with little piety.

"4. Let me always feel that I am 'a miracle of grace;' that I am to do God's work, not mine; and that if I think much of myself, God may blast my hopes of usefulness. He has no need of my services, and can easily dispense with them without any detriment to his kingdom."

"I find I am in a world of danger. God has already crowned my labors with unexpected success. He has given me many souls as seals of—what? I was about to say, faithfulness; but my conscience says, No. He has converted, as we trust, many through his abounding grace."

Alluding to his addresses on the danger of a false hope, he says, though they "shook the hope of many, and destroyed the hopes of others," yet they "seem to have been blessed. Some who were thrown into the deepest darkness, have come out like gold; they are humble, and fearful lest they should be left to injure the cause they profess to love; yet they are happy."

He mentions the arrival of a young minister to spend some weeks with the people. Mr. Porter went around with him and introduced him to the families. He rejoiced to leave them in such good hands, but was tried at the thought of parting with them. His heart lingered around the sacred spot, and it seemed as if he could hardly tear himself away. We find him often afterwards looking back with peculiar interest and deep emotion to the place and the blessed scenes in which he had been engaged in this vacation. He says,

"JAN. 31.—This day finishes a month which has been spent in this place; and what hath God wrought? Surely I am astonished at the wonder-

ful change. Several family-altars have been erected. Some families are almost entirely changed. God has richly blessed the people."

With these feelings he left the place hallowed in his memory by such tokens of mercy, where he had poured out so many prayers, and counsels, and tears, and where he had won so strong a hold on the affections of the little community. The committee of the church gave him thirty-five dollars, and presents were added from individuals. Thus, while he was seeking to benefit the souls of others, God was raising up for him those who ministered to his temporal necessities.

On his return to New Haven he wrote to his mother, accounting for his not visiting home in the vacation.

"YALE COLLEGE, Feb. 7, 1838.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,—I returned from Terrysville last Friday, after an absence of five weeks. You must not think that I have no desire to come home. I thought of my father, and mother, and sisters, and friends; but duty seemed to point a different way, and I cannot say but it will next vacation. I am aware that it is hard for you to spare me from home, and it causes me pain, when I allow myself to dwell upon it, to be so long absent. But what shall I do? The world is perishing, and needs all the moral and mental energy that can be applied to reclaim it; and

if God can make use of the talent he has given me, to advance his work *at all*, I feel bound to do it, though at the expense of your feelings and my own. But why should I say my own? For I *love* the work, and nothing gives me greater delight than the faithful discharge of duty. But there is nevertheless a natural tie that is strong and hard to be broken. I wish to guard you lest, if I should be absent in vacations, you should feel that I have lost my interest in home, and seek pleasure somewhere else. If I know my own heart, it is not pleasure that I seek, though it comes as a matter of course from the discharge of duty. I love my dear home as well as ever; but I must seek, hereafter, not *my own*, but the things which are Jesus Christ's. My health is very good. Love to all.

"As ever, your beloved son,

"CHARLES."

His return from Terrysville was hailed by those who had before enjoyed his labors at Westville, and he immediately entered on a continuance of them. Fresh from the scenes of a revival, with a heart glowing with zeal and love for souls, his presence seemed to infuse new life there. The meeting he there held, on being resumed, was full and solemn. After he had addressed the church, "one of the deacons arose and confessed his declension from God, and resolved to live a better life." His diary proceeds:

"Feb. 9.—Have thus far this term enjoyed much of the presence of God. I have not that delight of which Taylor speaks, but I have a sweet calm. Jesus seems precious, and I feel desirous of spending my time entirely for him. Brother S——n's suggestion with respect to consecrating every lesson to God as soon as I have learned it, and any portion of Scripture which I read or hear, I like very much. It tends to humility. It makes me feel that I am not my own, but am entirely Christ's. It is my earnest prayer that this term may be fully dedicated to God, that I may know that I grow in grace. Thus far I feel I can sincerely say I have done so, and may the blessed God keep me. 'Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.'"

"Afternoon. Went to brother C——'s room before dinner, and as both of us cared more about conversing on religion than for our dinner, we stayed at his room and spent the time in conversation and prayer. He has been greatly blessed. Many members of the school which he has been teaching, have been converted. God has taught him a new lesson. I hope he will go on from term to term with the same spirit."

Mr. Porter was now continually devising methods of active effort. Thus he writes, "Why may I not see my impenitent friends at our table converted? I know the Spirit of God must do it, but he has

promised a blessing. They are thoughtless for aught I know, but God can awaken them. O blessed Redeemer, wilt thou not honor thyself in their conversion? Lord, if thou canst make use of me, wilt thou do it; or any one, O Lord, whom thou wilt send. I feel that I can rejoice in their conversion, if I have to be laid aside for it. O Lord, revive thy work. Convert H——, and L——, and M——, and P——. Not my will, but thine be done."

"Resolved, that even if no other Christian brother is willing to exert himself for the salvation of my class-mates, I will go forward in the strength of my Redeemer. I will try to bring them to Christ.

"I have made so many good resolutions that I am almost afraid to make any more. I feel weak and utterly incapable of keeping them, or rather, I should say, that my wickedness prevents me from keeping them. I hope I have made the above resolution in full view of the difficulties I may meet in carrying it out. May the Lord assist me in using the *mite* of influence I have, in doing them good. Now lead me, blessed Saviour, day by day, hour by hour, and step by step; preserve me from doing any thing wrong; keep me from wounding conscience. May I walk before thee; may my thoughts be acceptable in thy sight; may my conversation be heavenly; may all see and feel that I have been with Jesus; and may I be a living epistle, known and read of

all men. May I remember that my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. May I be exceedingly careful not to defile it. May the inmost recesses of my heart be such that I should be willing to have my thoughts brought out and published to the world. May my life hereafter be more godlike, more consistent, and may I every day be doing all my Master's will, and preparing for that holy and heavenly rest which God has provided for those who love him. So let me live, so let me die. So let my soul at death wing its flight to purer, happier regions. Use me, O God, for thine own honor, in the salvation of men."

"Feb. 12.—Spoke to the people at Westville last evening. Had some conversation with two Catholics; found neither of them had a Bible, but each wished one. I purchased two with the Lord's money, which I intend to give them. From the money which I receive from new sources, and on which I do not depend regularly for support, I reserve one-tenth for giving where it seems to be needed. I do not think it right to give away the money which others save *on purpose* for my support; but of that which comes in unexpectedly, as that which I received the past vacation, I think it right to reserve a tenth for this blessed purpose. This tenth I put aside with the inscription, 'The Lord's money.'"

CHAPTER VI.

JUNIOR YEAR IN COLLEGE.

The progress of Mr. Porter's mind and heart thus far has been very apparent, and it is evident that he possessed many traits which prepared him for great usefulness. We resume our extracts from his diary.

"Feb. 13. — Heard from Terrysville. Brother S—— is still laboring successfully, and I hope we shall yet see *greater* things in that place. How I long to go. It seems as if I could hardly be contented to study; and yet I believe I can say, 'Not my will, but thine be done.' I will try to wait the appointed time, and diligently prepare myself for the great work which is before me. God can carry on his work of grace without my aid. Why, then, should I not be willing to be here? Help thou me, O God, that I may gladly wait till thou shalt call me into the field.

"I conversed with H—— yesterday about an hour. He appeared to feel no particular interest, but it seems to me that he will be converted. Wrote to the converts at Terrysville. Had an unusually sweet season of communion with God this evening. My heart seemed broken and melted. Thought much of the heathen to-day. Would that my mother would rejoice to have me go and die among them.

Should I live, and not go to Canada, probably my course will be over the great deep."

His feelings on this subject are more fully expressed in his record a few days later.

"FEB. 15.—Brother D—— tells me, that from all the colleges and seminaries in the United States, scarcely an individual can be obtained to go to Canada. Some are willing to go on foreign missions, hundreds on home missions to the West, but scarcely one can be prevailed on to go to Canada. Mr. Curry was here two years ago, and gave us a thrilling account of the situation of that people. Had I been ready, I would have gone at once; and it seemed to me that the eight or ten whom he asked for would at once be supplied. But tell them of a township ten miles square, with a thinly scattered population, many of whom are poor, ignorant, and debased; of having to preach anywhere and everywhere; of no roads, or very bad ones, perhaps without bridges; of no intelligent or Christian society, not even a minister, within twenty, thirty, or fifty miles; of a freezing climate, with six months of winter; of a mixed population of Scotch, Irish, French, English, and Americans; of having to labor for a small salary, just enough to live; of being out one side from the world, and laboring there as an humble pastor, unknown except by a few in the town or the surrounding population, and of a thousand other difficulties—and

they wish to be excused. One makes one excuse, and another, another; and hardly one can be found to go."

"I was thinking this evening, that men have no right to be discouraged who are laboring for Christ, even if they do not have success. If it were their own business, it would be different; but our duty is to find what God would have us do. When that is settled, we must at once do it, and leave it with him to bless the effort according to his pleasure. If we are discouraged because it does not turn out precisely according to our wishes, it would seem as if we are 'seeking our own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's.'"

The 22d of February was the day of prayer for colleges. Mr. Porter speaks of the state of the college as being interesting, and of one or two conversions which had taken place. He was, however, unexpectedly called to Westville.

"Though it was the fast for colleges to-day, and I much wished to be here, yet my tutor agreed with me, that I might be more useful at Westville in visiting the people and attending the meeting in the evening. Accordingly I did so: the meeting was full to overflowing; they had to open two rooms. Things continue to grow interesting, and I have great reason to hope there will be a copious shower of divine grace.

"FEB. 23.—Resolved to see every professing Christian in my division"—of his class—"and endeavor to enlist his feelings in the great cause. May I receive aid from heaven. I feel that I have done wrong in spending my hour at noon in conversing with brother A—— mostly on another subject than the interests of college.

"FEB. 27.—Began Edwards on Revivals; exceedingly interesting."

Mr. Porter from time to time heard of the advance of the work of grace at Terrysville, and he longed to be there. The number of converts had increased, and portions of the town not before so much blessed shared in the grace. One factory was closed one forenoon, and turned into a place of prayer.

He seems to have received much comfort from the assurance that the young converts whom he had been instrumental, as he hoped, of leading to the Saviour, appeared so well. He was informed that they were active in seeking to lead others in the right way, and might be seen "going to their impenitent friends weeping, and beseeching them to attend to their souls' salvation."

On the 18th of March, we find Mr. Porter at Humphreysville, a part of the town of Derby, not far from New Haven. He was invited there by the pastor of the church to assist him in an interesting state of religious feeling among his people, and obtained liberty

to be absent a few days from college. From his account there appears to have been much to contend with. The church had not humbled themselves before God, and did not feel as they ought the greatness of the blessing which they sought. Political meetings and school exhibitions at first drew off a portion of the people. But the pastor and Mr. Porter persevered in their prayerful endeavors, and not without success. On the 25th he writes, "The tide has turned. The work of the Lord now seems to go forward. Several, we hope, have been converted, though the church has had to wade through a sea of difficulties." He received tokens of gratitude from the people, and says, "Let me remember brother ——'s treatment of ministers, and always try to make the people satisfied with them."

On his return from Humphreysville he heard again from Terrysville, that the work of grace was still continued there, and says, "It is a sweet comfort to feel that one has been instrumental in the salvation of souls, and yet there is a painful anxiety lest they should dishonor the cause of Christ."

His heart was also gladdened by the receipt of a letter from home on the 18th of April, approving his proposed visit to Canada. His parents felt that if the choice for him lay between a foreign field and one nearer home, they greatly preferred the latter, and hoped, that by enlisting his feelings in some such

scene of labor, he might be induced to give up his purpose of crossing the ocean.

Mr. Porter's next entry is at Norwich, during the vacation.

"MAY 13.—About the close of the term visited Terrysville for a few days. Found the people in an exceedingly interesting state. Meetings were crowded. Many had been hopefully converted since I left; many more were anxious, and some it is hoped were converted while I was there. They urged me to stay, but I had promised to go another way."

He went to New York, where he visited Sabbath-schools and attended the anniversaries; and then to Norwich, where, during the absence of the pastor, he attended meetings, and as usual visited from house to house, conversing with the people. He was now in the circle of his relatives, and he speaks as always with great tenderness of those who he believed were still out of Christ.

Alluding to some preparation for addressing others on which he had bestowed much labor, he says, in a spirit of humble dependence, "Lord, it is thine, not mine."

On his return to college, he engaged again with unusual delight in his studies. The wonders of science seem to have attracted him, and he was led anew to adore the greatness of God, as well as to feel that but for sin, man might be equal almost to

the angels in knowledge and holiness. "But," he says, "alas, fallen, fallen! Therefore may we implore pardon for the past, assistance for the present, and direction for the future. O my Saviour, my Father, let a guilty and polluted worm yet hide himself beneath the shadow of thy wings."

His labors were continued in the Sabbath-school. He mentions some encouraging facts, and says, "The Spirit of God seems to be at work." One of the children "professed herself willing to serve the Saviour." He also mentions a person benefited by his labors a year before, and says, "She feels that she has been converted, and with tears thanked me for that conversation. Whether it had any influence in leading her to her Saviour, I know not. If she is one of *Christ's own children,* it is of little consequence whose labors brought her to him, as it must all, from first to last, be traced to the love of God, the grace of Christ, and the influence of the Spirit. Blessed be God that the glory all belongs to him. O that I might sink into the ocean of his love."

"JUNE 3.—Thus far during my junior year, I have been blessed above former years. May the last few weeks prove the best of all.

"JUNE 5.—Daily meetings commenced yesterday, about ten or fifteen minutes in length, after tea; very refreshing. Lessons easy; am enabled to get them, besides attending two extra lectures. This,

of course, keeps me constantly occupied. Work marked out for every moment of the twenty-four hours, so that it is not necessary to lose any."

Though the entries in Mr. Porter's diary are now shorter and less frequent than at other times, yet they furnish proof of his increased attachment to the cause of Christ, and of his growth in grace. His labors of various kinds were continued, and he notices instances of one and another from time to time giving themselves to God. His mind appears to have been intent on promoting the spiritual life of his class-mates and others among whom his lot was cast. Thus he says, "Spent about an hour this evening in endeavoring to persuade Mrs. P—— to attend at once to her soul's salvation." "Suggested to brother L—— the idea of a fast with reference to the coming responsibilities of Senior year. We may suggest it to the class. I can truly say, that my Junior year has been one of many blessings. I have had, I think, more spiritual feasts and melting seasons than in either of the other two. I think that God has blessed my labors to the salvation of as many souls as in all the former years of my life together."

The responsibilities to which he alludes in the coming senior year, may be indicated by stating that the duty of leading the various meetings in college devolves on the members of the Senior class; and the religious aspect of the college receives a charac-

ter from the state of spirituality which exists in this class. Mr. Porter, at the time when the Senior class left, was chosen one of the number from the future Senior class, who were to act as leaders in the church of the college. He says, in view of it,

"It was unexpected, and involves great responsibility. If I accept this, I must resign my Sabbath-school. Both are important; but which is most so? I hope to be taught of God. I have felt for some time a deeper interest in the college, and more of the spirit of prayer for it, than before in three years; and have sometimes doubted whether I had not better give up my Sabbath-school, and devote my whole attention to college. What will now be best, I know not. If I can get some devoted person to fill my place at Westville, I shall be inclined to return to college; but I think God will teach me. The suggestion of a fast was made at a meeting this evening, and the brethren seem to think it important."

"JUNE 27.—How thankful I am that wiser and better heads than my own advised me, when first setting out, to take a full course. Although I long to be in the field, yet I feel that I can not only wait my appointed time, but when I think how poorly fitted I shall be for the station even then, I feel thankful that I can study several years longer."

He continues to breathe forth the most earnest desires for greater holiness, deprecates the secret sins

of his heart, admires the grace of God in sustaining him while others are cut off, and speaks of a prayer-meeting of the brethren at noon, and the sweet refreshment he had while calling on them at their rooms, and in private prayer at his own.

He was now severely tried by a pecuniary disappointment, but says, "I have no reason to be anxious. God has taken care of me hitherto, and I trust he will in future. Let me rather be anxious to do his will, and walk before him with a perfect heart. Perhaps this is the beginning of a series of afflictions by which he means to purify me. If so, thy will, not mine, be done, O Father."

Having heard of the death of a class-mate, he writes,

"JULY 22.—I love to think of death. It is sweet to feel that this our earthly tabernacle will soon be dissolved; dust crumble to dust. Soon the messenger appears, and what a change!

"O for a more holy walk with God. This is what I need. 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.' Then should I be enabled to adopt the beautiful language of the poet, 'O that I had wings like a dove. Then would I fly away, and be at rest.' Sweet rest! heavenly rest! rest for the body, rest for the soul; rest from sin, rest from cares, rest from pain, sickness, sorrow, and death! A rest with God our Father, who hath so loved us as to give us his

only-begotten Son. Rest with Jesus, who hath redeemed us with his precious blood. Rest with the Spirit, who, by his sweet influences, drew us to the Lamb. A rest with angels, who surround the throne day and night, crying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth. A rest with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, with Joseph, and Moses, and Joshua, and Isaiah, and David, and Paul, and all the holy throng who have ever dwelt upon the earth. O glorious rest: we wait for it, and will, by the grace of God, endeavor to be prepared for it any hour."

Mr. Porter felt it to be necessary to leave college, some time before the commencement, to recruit his health. Before this, however, after noticing his birthday, and speaking of the wonderful grace bestowed on him, he gives another instance of God's providential care of him in the time of need.

"Aug. 9.—For many days have been expecting a letter from my brother containing money, but none came; was reduced to thirty-five cents; feared I should be obliged to borrow, as I expect to leave town to-day or to-morrow; but just now received a letter from Mr. D——, enclosing ten dollars. How wonderfully does my heavenly Father provide! Blessed be his name for this. May the Lord reward brother D—— a hundred-fold."

He now took an excursion on foot to Providence, R. I., with the intention of spending two or three

weeks in recreation in that vicinity. He remarks, "It was exceedingly difficult to *compel* myself to be willing to spend a week or two in mere diversion; but my duty seemed to be clear. I must use all the means in my power to preserve my health. Many young men, well-educated and pious, and who long to preach, are laid aside as useless. May the Lord preserve me from a like visitation."

In a letter to a friend, written at Norwich, on his way to Providence, he seems moved by the consideration of God's goodness in preserving his health the past year, so that he had scarcely lost a day. He appears to look forward to his coming Senior year with delightful anticipations, and speaks especially of his theological course in prospect as "a harvest rich beyond expression." "I cannot bear," he writes, "to think that it must pass away so soon, and leave me, even if I do my best, so ignorant. O how my soul exults even to think of tasting the knowledge which lies open before me. It seems as if I would delight to enter upon almost any single branch, and spend centuries exploring its depths."

With his eye fixed on the office of a minister of the gospel, he again remarks, "I shall need to put on anew the robe of righteousness, and be clad with spiritual armor, before I shall be prepared for that great office. O what an office! Worthy of an angel. Would that I might be so far elevated above

the world, that I may not disgrace the blessed station."

One can hardly recognize, in these earnest pantings after knowledge, the youth once so averse to study as he presents himself in our opening chapter. What a transformation; and in this case no one can doubt that it was owing to the influence of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Porter remained in Rhode Island a little more than a week. He says,

"Aug. 26.—Conscience would not let me hunt and fish. It pains me to give pain to any thing. God has been drawing graciously near my soul today. Such a season I have not enjoyed for a long time. O how barren I have been. I am ashamed of myself. God enabled me to plead for great blessings the coming year, particularly for humility. Herein I am greatly wanting; I feel that I am sadly deficient. The humility of Christ appears perfectly lovely. I can see it also in his ancient disciples. His modern children too, frequently possess it. But oh, when I look into my own heart, the depth, the awful depth of depravity. I desire to be more humble, and the Lord enabled me to plead for it this morning with much more earnestness than usual. My soul seemed to agonize for this one great blessing. I plead nearly an hour, though the time to me seemed very short.

"This noon was greatly assisted in prayer for a further blessing on the coming year: a willingness to spend much more time in communion with God; that the closet may be a delight; that my affections may be raised far above the world, its praises, and its censures; that I may find intercourse with God far sweeter than any intercourse whatever with any human being, and that I may have a sense of the power, wisdom, mercy, justice, holiness, and spotless purity of God. For such blessings did the Spirit incline me to pray, and may God answer my prayers as he shall see fit. Into thy hands, O God, I commit my spirit.

"I am a poor, frail, dying creature. I am exceedingly guilty; hardly a point to which I apply the touchstone of thy word escapes condemnation. I see myself to be vile, and I am almost afraid to live, lest I should commit some dreadful sin which would fix a lasting stigma upon my character, and deeply wound the cause of Christ. O thou upon whose arm alone I lean, preserve one so weak, so frail, so liable to err, so easily led away by temptation."

In a few days we find him laboring in Willimantic, a small factory village in the eastern part of Connecticut. He states, that during the early part of the summer there had been several conversions, but for several weeks the religious interest had diminished, and the meetings were more thinly attend-

ed. His own soul was, however, alive and engaged, and he expresses his feelings in a letter of advice to a friend, in whose Christian welfare he felt much interest.

"SEPT. 4, 1838.—Strive to learn the *art*, if I may so speak, of doing good. I think Christians generally are far too forgetful of the great end of their being. We need to learn how to do good. Many are sincerely desirous of accomplishing something, but do not seem to know how. Study the human heart. The Bible will teach it. I have also been much assisted by Mason's Self-knowledge. Another very excellent way to get at the heart, besides watching attentively our own, is to get Christians and new converts to tell us what their feelings were before they were serious, while they were so, and after they obtained a hope; how they felt about the pleasures and business of the world, how about religion, ministers, and Christians, and what their objections were, and how removed. Thus one dives to the bottom of the heart. Then we can tell how others feel, so that they will hardly believe that some one has not revealed to us their feelings. In this way we can find what to say to the impenitent. If we find them careless, we must present some truth to rouse them from their lethargy; if they have tender feelings, but are not anxious, show them their guilt; if anxious, guide them to the Lamb; and if

they hope in him, lead them, if possible, to feel that they have a great work before them, and that what they do must be done quickly."

"SEPT. 4.—Talked almost constantly for four hours—found myself somewhat exhausted; and from all my intercourse with the people this afternoon, I should judge that there was little hope of a revival. Yet God can appear. I feel confident that he, and only he can cause these dry bones to live. Our meeting this evening was very solemn. Eternity seemed near; the subject, the judgment. Many tears dropped during the presentation of the truth. O that God may speak, and then I know that man will hear."

Alluding to his struggles with pride, he says, "O that I might be willing that my worthless name might rot that Christ may be exalted. O that I might be so lost in the ocean of his love as for ever to forget myself."

His feelings led him to think of his home and those there whom he loved, and he says,

"SEPT. 9.—Thought seriously of going home to-morrow, on purpose to preach Christ to my father and his family, invite him to ask a blessing at the table and pray in his family, and if he would not do it himself, to let me do it every time I come home. Lord, teach me my duty clearly, and give me grace to discharge it. When I get home, I always am too

much as I used to be. I have had far too much of a man-fearing spirit. They have sometimes been afraid I was running crazy, hence I have not been as devoted before them as I ought to be. O that I might be more like Jesus Christ."

"SEPT. 10.—Upon more reflection concluded that it would not be duty to attempt to ask a blessing and have family prayers *myself*, but I think that I will try to set a more Christian example, and endeavor to talk plainly. Lord, give me grace to do it."

CHAPTER VII.

SENIOR YEAR IN COLLEGE.

Our readers have noticed Mr. Porter's progress in intellectual attainments. His mind became more mature with his years; and the purpose by which he was actuated in seeking to acquire knowledge, to devote all to God, exercised an ennobling influence upon him, and gave him a firmness and perseverance which enabled him to control himself, and gain influence over others. He thus marks his return to college and entrance on his Senior year.

"Sept. 27, 1838.—I enter to-day upon the studies of my senior year. May the Lord direct me. By his grace assisting, I hope to live a better life. O that this may be a year of practical godliness. I feel that unless he hold me up, I shall fall. O blessed Jesus, suffer me not to stray."

"Sabbath Morning, Sept. 30.—O the loving-kindness of Jesus; how sweet, how sweet his presence. This morning I feel that he has fed my soul with heavenly manna. No tongue can express, no heart can conceive the blessedness, the sweet, the sacred blessedness of communion with Jesus, but one that knows it by experience. Could men but once taste such love, they would say to the world farewell My little bedroom is indeed my Bethel.

'Tell me no more of earthly joys.'

They have no charms for me. Tears filled my eyes while at prayer, my soul melted sweetly, and I longed for more of Jesus. Never have I felt so desirous to grow in grace as of late. I feel guilty for having been so cold and indifferent during my previous years. O that my future life may be more consecrated to God. The passage, 'Do good unto *all* men as ye have opportunity,' has of late taken deep hold of my mind. May I be careful to observe it. I find many *opportunities*, and I hope I may hereafter more diligently improve them. Why may I not enjoy from day to day a state of mind that will enable me to feel willing at any time to depart and be with Christ; yea, more, that will make me long 'to fly away and be at rest?' I do hope that this year will not pass without my being brought to feel so dead to the world that I shall be found in Paul's 'strait.'"

He speaks of the dull and unpromising state of religion around him, and in allusion to the efforts made to secure the newly entered students for a literary society, says, "Why not be as interested to get them into the society of Jesus? Feel resolved to pray for a revival, to labor with my Christian brethren to the same end, and to go to the impenitent. Who knows but God may open the windows of heaven and pour us out a blessing? Lord, fit me for the work which thou hast for me to do. O may I be

humbled, and brought to feel as I ought with reference to this subject." He then thus closes one of the books of his diary:

"OCT. 3.—'And of his kingdom there shall be no end.' Blessed be God! Blessed be the name of Christ! Of thy kingdom there shall be *no end*. Kings and princes have already risen up against it. The earth has been drenched with the blood of martyrs, but thy throne is not yet overturned. Nor will it ever be. Nation after nation will rise and fall. Generation after generation will successively roll unnumbered millions into eternity, but thy kingdom shall stand as long as the earth endures; yea, when the earth and all things therein shall be burned up, it shall endure, and endure for ever. Glorious thought! That all the powers of hell shall not prevail against it. What, then, am I? What, among the hundreds of millions who are constantly passing through the world? What a little speck. What an insignificant atom. Christ can build up his kingdom just as well, if he pleases, without me. O that I might feel it, and count it a great mercy if I am permitted to have the smallest share in the building up of his church.

"O God, I pray thee make me wholly thine. O may I be entirely swallowed up in the love of Christ. Let me not stray from thy paths. Thou art my strength and shield. Keep, O keep me, heavenly

Father. I shall fall without thee. My steps will slide. I am a wandering child, easily led astray. I am a miracle of grace. If I ever get to heaven, it will be sovereign, unmerited goodness—grace, grace, to a poor straying, proud, self-seeking sinner. I have nothing to plead before thee. Make me thine, entirely thine. O for a baptism of the Holy Ghost. May I be willing ever hereafter to deny myself, take up my cross, and follow thee. O for a holy heart, a heart of love, a burning heart, through which God may work for his own glory. And now, O God, my Father, my Creator, my Preserver, my Benefactor, my Redeemer, I sacredly give, I consecrate to thee my life, my all. A poor offering, but all I have. To thee I give myself, for life, for death, for time, for eternity. May I ever feel that I am thine, that I am to do thy will wholly; that I am no more to confer with flesh and blood; that I am, in all cases, to seek thy will; in short, to be in Christ and he in me. And now to thee, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be praise and glory for ever. Amen."

A break here occurs in Mr. Porter's diary, as one of the numbers is missing, which we cannot but the more regret, as he seems to have entered upon a most interesting portion of his life. It would be gratifying to go along with him in his efforts to benefit his fellow-students, and to trace the progress of his spiritual life just after the last glowing words

and holy breathings. The following letter to his sister may, perhaps, in some degree supply the deficiency.

"YALE COLLEGE, Nov. 3, 1838.

"MY DEAR SISTER—I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. S. this afternoon, and though I have not yet seen the letter he has for me, I will commence answering it. Time flies rapidly. Soon, very soon I shall be absorbed in theological studies: a moment gone, I shall stand, Providence permitting, a herald of the gospel. After which, farewell, ye sacred halls, ye places of retirement; farewell, ye halcyon days; farewell, ye beloved associates, ye delightful vacations; and farewell, ye relatives and friends whom I delight to visit.

"And whither shall I go? Into the cold region of Canada? To India? To China? To the Sandwich Islands? Perhaps to one of these places. If I think it a duty, I shall doubtless go. I think I am willing to go to the uttermost part of the earth, if my Master call me there. And though it would be like severing a limb from the body to go against my dear parents' will, yet if Jesus call me to make the sacrifice, it is not for me 'to confer with flesh and blood.' I must make it. My Bible teaches me to forsake—whom? My enemies? That would be no trial at all. My acquaintances? That perhaps would be somewhat hard. But it goes much farther: 'He

that will not forsake all that he hath, cannot be my disciple.' He must be willing to forsake even his own beloved father and mother, his brothers and sisters, his relations and friends, his property, his country, his all. And is this too much? Ah, no. Jesus has shed his own blood on Calvary for me, and shall I refuse to spend my life for him? Shall I consult my ease, my happiness, my honor, when it interferes with the advancement of his kingdom?

"But do you begin to feel as though I were almost on the billows, floating upon the deep? I am not yet gone, nor do I know that I shall ever go. I have sometimes thought I should; but the great probability is, that I shall lose myself among the millions of the western valley. I may yet stay in New England. I may be settled within a dozen miles of my native place. If I can find where the great Head of the church will have me stationed, there will I stand as a sentinel and watch, whether it be among his army at home, or upon one of the most distant outposts. I cannot say yet where I shall be. I am afraid I shall be governed too much by love of ease, by affection for earthly friends and similar motives. I find so much sin working in me that I am very liable to be misled.

"I wish my mother and sisters loved the Saviour and the poor heathen enough not only to be willing, but earnestly to desire to have me go from the

bosom of their own family, and carry them the glad tidings of great joy. Then I should not be so liable to be misled, and if I stayed at home I should not be afraid that I did it merely from a desire to please my friends. But you must not give yourself any great uneasiness, for as things look at present, I see no prospect that I shall go. My bones will probably lie buried in my own native land, though I sometimes think they may whiten some foreign shore. But enough. As ever,

"Your beloved brother,

"CHARLES."

In a letter from Mr. Porter to his friend Mr. D. of New York, dated December 8, 1838, he says, very characteristically, "Last evening I received another fifty dollar bill from my dear brother George, which, had I known when it was coming, would have saved me from saying any thing to you; but it will all come in use, and that too without waste. It will probably more than cover the expenses of the present term, so that I hope not to have to call for more assistance for several months. I am really tired, and almost ashamed to call further upon my friends; and I think somewhat of boarding myself next term, that I may avoid it. I believe, however, that I shall not have to reproach myself for extravagance, though I must say that my conscience of late has been somewhat touched by a couple of volumes introduced to

my library. Most persons, were they to glance at my library, would say, 'What, he need assistance? Such a library! It is as good as half our young ministers have at their first setting out, and yet he is not through college.' I think I have a good library for one so early in his course and so poor, for it contains about 150 volumes. But almost all are the gifts of dear friends. Two expensive volumes, however, have been added lately, and as I am not certain that I ought to keep them, I will ask some advice." He proceeds to state that these two volumes were Townsend's Bible, in which the parts are chronologically arranged, which he supposed would be very valuable, and which being in large type he could read and study at night, and for which he exchanged a work on chemistry.

Mr. Porter appears to have spent his vacation at Northfield, as we find two letters during this period dated from that place. He was engaged, it is believed, in laboring in a revival of religion there. In the former of these letters he says,

"JAN. 9, 1839.—I always find a blessing in endeavoring to 'do good and communicate,' and as usual have found one at this time. I know I am utterly unworthy of it, yet God condescends to grant it. O that I had stamped more deeply upon my heart my Saviour's image. This I need, and for this I would request your prayers. I need more

humility, a more entire dedication of all I have and all I am to God. Little do we feel the great realities of a coming eternity. O that I may learn to be a better man." He cautions his friend not to let the heart be too much engrossed in study, urges him to a life of holiness, "and if possible to win souls to God;" and enforces his advice by a reference to his own example, and the effects of study on his own heart.

Again, January 18, he observes, "I feel that I am in peculiar danger. I have naturally a proud and ambitious spirit, and things are constantly taking place to fan the unholy fire which burns within my bosom. But Oh for the humility of my dear Redeemer. Alas, how different is our spirit from His. Pray for me, that prosperity may not be my ruin. I have no strength in myself, and if the Lord withhold his protecting hand I shall fall, to rise no more."

The sixth number of Mr. Porter's diary opens in the second term of his senior year, Feb. 20, 1839, with these words: "O that before this book is filled, God might permit me to record the conversion of one hundred souls. I feel that such a blessing looks large, but still thou, O my Father, canst do it; and I feel that no one else in the universe can. Were ministers to preach and Christians to labor for ever, still the balm of Jesus must be applied to cleanse the sin-

sick soul. Come then, O my Father, make bare thine arm and manifest thy glory."

He was soon occupied during his leisure hours in visiting families and attending meetings in West Haven, and considerable seriousness was manifested. He mentions the case of two or three who gave evidence of a change of heart. Still, he had some trials there, and alluding to the conduct of some persons who appeared trifling at one of the meetings, he says, "O how it did annoy me. Truly ministers must be tried. I feel that I can sympathize with them far better than I could formerly. How entirely dependent are we on God for a blessing."

A sudden providence, the drowning of a member of college, struck a blow on the hearts of even the thoughtless. A revival of religion in the church, and also an awakening to inquiry among the hitherto careless and stupid were soon manifested, and some who had backslidden, began to return. He says, March 9, the day of the young man's drowning,

"Professors of religion have, to some extent, been faithfully conversed with. But O what a dreadful coldness. One particularly, who I had hoped would enter into the work of the Lord, is completely discouraged. He has tried to labor faithfully, but finding no result follow has become disheartened. O God, encourage him."

Again, two days afterwards, he says, in reference

to the death, "I have my fears lest it be suffered to pass unimproved. Some whom I have seen, feel determined to live anew; but O, some others—it sickens my heart, it breaks my spirit to see their reluctance. O my God, if such a terrible calamity as this start them not from their slumbers, what will? But we will leave it with thee. Teach us our duty as individuals, and may we endeavor to do it, though we never see any result. Have mercy upon us, O God, have mercy upon us."

God was gracious, and he writes, March 15, "The religious feeling is constantly deepening and widening. Solemnity is depicted on almost all. The recitation-room has become silent almost as the grave. No noise, no array of effort, no extra meetings, and no extra exertion at our regular meetings. God works in his own way; Christians are praying much; they have frequent prayer-meetings, and pray when three or four get together; they are conversing on the subject constantly; their hearts are broken, melted, and subdued. Never before, since I have been in college, have I seen any thing like such a state of feeling on the part of the church. It becomes us to walk carefully before God, lest we grieve his Spirit."

Mr. Porter's anxiety for the progress of this work was great. He watched every phase of feeling, every particular instrumentality; now trembling, and

now rejoicing. The revival soon became powerful, and Mr. Porter's whole soul was enlisted in promoting it. At the same time he had crowded meetings at West Haven, and his heart was cheered by the good news from Northfield. He mentions his reading the life of Whitefield, and longs to have a spirit like his. He deplores again his love of praise, and condemns himself as a vile and guilty being. At the commencement of the month of April, he says, "Blessed be God, I feel that I wish to spend this month in more intimate communion with my Maker than any hitherto. May the Lord help me so to do. All my dependence is on him."

Mr. Porter made a short visit to Terrysville in the month of April, and mentions an incident that occurred on his way home, with reference to one of the converts of the revival there the year before. He says, "I went into the house to see the mother, and was much gratified to find that her son continued to appear well. She said he came home one evening when they lived at Terrysville, and as his father was sick, he took the Bible, read a chapter, and prayed before the whole family. They were greatly surprised, and his father, though a professor of religion, thought it was mere excitement and would soon be over. But he has been a growing Christian. His mother says he has learned more by studying mornings and evenings and spare moments, since his con-

version, than he did before at school. What a wonderfully transforming influence does the gospel have upon the intellect as well as the heart."

He also went to Westfield, Mass., where he spent his vacation. An extract from a letter to a friend thus describes his feelings soon after reaching that place :

"APRIL 29.—I find here many friends who are dear to me, and with whom in former days I have taken sweet converse. I find, too, great changes. Some have removed far away, and not a few have fallen before the destroyer—death. Their spirits are now, I trust, among the redeemed, tuning their harps in heaven. I feel that I can sing in truth,

'I would not live alway, I ask not to stay,' etc.

I have felt sometimes, since coming here, as if I could bid death welcome at any time. He looks to me more like a pleasing messenger than he did formerly. Life looks shorter than ever before, and forcibly reminds me that I must work while it is called to-day. It will speedily vanish ; therefore, what we do must be done quickly.

"Forget not to cultivate your heart. Be holy, as God is holy. If you would be truly useful, cultivate holiness to the Lord. Other things are important, but holiness is indispensable. I feel that I have been richly blessed since I have been in this place. My soul has been again and again sweetly melted under

the influence of the blessed Spirit. My sins have been like mountains, but I think I have seen the great excellency and beauty of Christ. I have longed to become more assimilated to his holy character. It is strange that I should ever wander from him, but such is my heart, that I do frequently. Let us try to keep near to him. Let us aim at the salvation of souls. Nothing else in this world affords me the satisfaction that I derive from a consciousness of having been made an instrument through Christ in the salvation of a soul. Such I find scattered here and there along my pathway. Such I have found here, such I found in my way to Terrysville, and many such there. For all this I would praise the Lord. Let us learn from it to be faithful in future."

To his mother he writes, May 1, 1839,

"My dearly beloved Mother—It grieves me to think of the disappointment which my absence must necessarily occasion you and my dear sisters. But what shall I do? I should delight to come home and spend my vacation under our own roof. But is it best? Shall I win as many souls to Christ? 'A prophet,' says our Saviour, 'is not without honor, save in his own country.' There is a great deal of human nature expressed in this short sentence. I have thought many times I could be more useful anywhere else than in Norwich.

"I often think, it will soon be out of my power to visit you, and that perhaps I had better spend what time I can at home; and then, again, I think that during my vacations I may possibly do as much good as when I become a minister; for if the Saviour bless my efforts during vacation in different places, there may be as many souls born into the kingdom as in any one place during a year of my coming ministry. I feel, too, that this kind of labor is almost as essential in preparing me for usefulness as a minister of Christ, as my collegiate course. No one can imagine the inestimable benefit derived from such a course unless he has tried it. I am aware that the feelings of nature have to be sacrificed, but the reward abundantly compensates. It gives one a warmth of heart books cannot afford. It gives an insight into human nature which is of great importance to success. It makes him familiar with all classes of society, so that he fears not to enter the habitations of the rich and preach to them Jesus, and at the same time he becomes conversant with the feelings of the poor. He learns not to desire the riches of the former, when he sees them almost universally connected with so many corroding cares; while he learns from the latter to be content with his lot. It teaches him to sympathize with the bereaved, very many of whom he meets in his labors, and prepares him to 'bind up the broken-hearted,' pouring into their

hearts 'the oil of consolation.' He learns, too, what kind of preaching is adapted to mankind generally; he learns wherein ministers excel, and wherein they are deficient; and why it is that some ministers have the affection of every family in their congregations.

"Religion is no fiction; or if it is, it is a blessed fiction, and one which I desire to impart to the whole apostate race of man. O, when it will afford such unspeakable satisfaction, such amazing comfort, such exultation in a dying hour, such a longing to depart and be with Christ, as was exhibited in a Miss B——, who died a few weeks since in this village"—Westfield—"surely I would lift up my prayer that it may be extended to all. I feel earnestly desirous, if I know my own heart, to spend *all* my time in the service of my blessed Redeemer. Such are some of the considerations which induce me to spend so many of my vacations from home.

"Believe me, ever to remain,

"Your affectionate son,

"CHARLES."

Mr. Porter's account of the revival in Westfield, in his diary, is dated May 21.

"Spent the vacation in Westfield. Had a blessed time, and God saw fit to magnify the riches of his grace in the conversion of fifteen or twenty, as we hope.

"One of the first converts was a little girl about

ten or twelve years old. The first time I saw her she was in deep distress; but, as she afterwards told me, she was almost angry when I spoke to her. The Lord, however, soon subdued her obstinate heart, and she has since given pleasing evidence of piety.

"A young man, who several days was exceedingly troubled, and could neither work nor sleep in peace, and who fought against the decrees of God, was finally brought humbly to the cross.

"A woman who had not attended one of the meetings, with whom no one had spoken, and who had always shunned ministers, was visited by the Holy Spirit, and brought to trust her heart to Christ. Her husband, an intemperate, quarrelsome man, was also greatly humbled, and now is, to all appearance, a Christian—prays in his family, and goes with his wife to the meetings. A beautiful sight. I hope it may prove indeed a work of grace.

"A husband who was too proud even to kneel in prayer, has been converted, and, so far as man can judge, gives evidence of piety. He now prays in his family, and we hope walks with God.

"A young lady, who has been anxious for a year, has at length found peace in Christ; and another, who has been under deep anxiety most of the time for two years, wonders that she was never willing to yield before.

"A young man remained after the meeting one

evening, with several others. He was in very deep distress. He continued several days in this state, almost despairing of mercy. He had been a drunkard, though young; but the Lord had mercy on him."

Mr. Porter has given quite an extended account of the mode he adopted in conversing with individuals in this revival, some extracts from which may be interesting and instructive.

"I feel that God's Spirit was the prime mover of the whole. I felt sensibly that vain was the help of man. I have talked sometimes for hours with individuals, but I find that it is wholly vain unless God sanctify it. Unless He change the heart, it cannot be changed. Yet I did not fail to press home upon the sinner's conscience the absolute necessity of his giving his heart to Christ; the utter uselessness of trying to make his heart better by delay; his guilt in putting it off; his desert of damnation if he neglected this great, this simple, this excellent, this *only* salvation. I tried to vindicate the character of God, and show the sinner as well as I knew how, that he himself was entirely to blame for not being a Christian, and that if God should cut him down this moment and send him to hell, he would be perfectly just.

"One of the young ladies insisted that she had *done all she could.* I asked her if she was in the habit of retiring alone, and upon her knees begging God's mercy, and then tried to show her the guilt of living

without prayer, and the folly of expecting forgiveness without asking it. As I left her, she seemed to feel that she was a rebel against God. I met her about dusk. She choked for utterance, and asked my forgiveness. She came out a sweet, decided, humble Christian.

"I found one young man fighting with God's purposes: that 'he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth;' again, 'My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.' I told him that God's word was sent to accomplish the sinner's salvation if he regarded it, and his damnation if he rejected it; that it proved a savor of life unto life, or death unto death; that God had mercy on him that confessed and forsook his sins; that God had a right to reign and rule, and would do it, whether he opposed or not; that he would not turn aside his designs to suit his convenience; that he designed fire should burn, and he would not alter a law of nature for the sake of accommodating him; and if he wished to be clear of the pain, he must keep out of the fire. So, in regard to God's moral law, if he wished to be free from the fire of God's wrath, he must yield to God's directions, and obey him, and *love* to obey him, delighting to leave all at God's own disposal. If he could not understand God's *purposes*, I told him that

there was much that he could understand, and that he must be willing to wait and learn; that he could understand far more now than when he was a child, and if he continued from the present time diligently and prayerfully to read the Scriptures for ten or twenty years, he would then probably see many things clearly which he could not now understand. That it was unreasonable for a child to look into the back part of an arithmetic, and at once reject it because he could not understand it, when, by beginning right and patiently pursuing it, he might in time understand the whole. So with the Bible. If people were willing to begin with its most simple parts, and gradually learn by patient study and prayer, they would in a few years arrive at great knowledge, compared with their former ignorance. I saw him the night I left, and found him in a very different state of mind, apparently submissive to the divine will. He said hereafter he was determined to devote his days to God. He is about seventeen. I directed his attention to the ministry.

He proceeds to the detail of other cases, especially those illustrating the trials and duties of pious children and of mothers, whose parents or husbands were far from God. A daughter, who felt that she could never enjoy religion at home, was led first to converse freely with her mother, and then even to go out into the field to speak with her father, and with the

happiest results. A woman who entreated her husband to pray with his family, and when he refused requested the privilege of herself attempting the duty, soon found him deeply anxious for his soul; and "in a few days he was brought out an humble and decided Christian, and is now an honor to the Christian cause." Of the young lady who faithfully conversed with her father, he says,

"O the feelings of that poor child. I knew how to sympathize with her from the bottom of my soul. Of all the crosses which I ever attempted to take up, nothing has been so great as this very thing. Many times have I gone to my father on purpose, and gone away with a sorrowful heart; either not having spoken at all, or at any rate but a little. Nor have I ever yet fully satisfied my conscience on this point. It is a delicate thing for a child to take the place which a parent ought to occupy; but, by the grace of God, I hope yet to do it."

His soul appears to be in the enjoyment of communion with God, and he speaks of the "sweet seasons" he had at prayer in the woods, of the "blessing" which he found while reading the memoirs of pious men, and the still more excellent word of God. He mentions attending the funeral of a young man, and says he had written to the parents of the deceased, who resided in Canada. "Thought," he remarks, "perhaps I may die far from home in a

land of strangers, and be buried in a potter's-field. Well, a potter's-field is good enough for my *body*, only give my soul a glimpse of Jesus. O thou God of the universe, thou Saviour of lost sinners, have compassion; wash away my sins, deep and dreadful as they are. Thou canst scrutinize them. No other being can behold the immeasurable depths of wickedness. It seems sometimes as if I could not endure the sight. O thou cleansing Fountain, let me wash my guilty, sin-stained robes in thy blood; then shall I be purified."

He spent the time that elapsed between the senior examination for degrees and the commencement, in Norwich and its vicinity. Here and at Bozrahville he was engaged in attending meetings and visiting the people. After commencement he visited New York and other places, and mentions that he had received an invitation to go to Canada and spend a few weeks before commencing his theological studies.

He had now accomplished one great object on which his heart had been set, and by diligent application had obtained those habits of study and other acquisitions, by which he was qualified to enter upon the studies immediately preparatory to the sacred office. He had also gained much experience in revivals of religion and other departments of labor, and acquired that knowledge of human nature which he hoped would render him increasingly useful in future years.

CHAPTER VIII.

VISIT TO CANADA—LIFE IN THE SEMINARY.

Our readers have observed the feelings with which Mr. Porter regarded Canada. For years his thoughts had turned to it as a field of future labor; but he seems to have found no opportunity to gratify his desire to visit that country. Having now finished his collegiate course, and with the vacation before him previous to his entrance on his theological studies, he resolved to carry his purpose into execution. We accordingly find him dating his diary at Burlington, Vt., on his way to Canada. He says,

"Aug. 25, 1839.—I might have been almost or quite in Montreal at this time, if I had gone onward. Conscience thundered at the thought, and I concluded that it was better to obey God than to break the Sabbath, though it delayed me two days and made quite a difference in the expense. After the decision was made, I had one of the most heavenly seasons that I have ever enjoyed. At Whitehall, yesterday morning, for an hour and a half I had such a season of delight in God as I trust I shall never forget."

"New Glasgow, Lower Canada, Aug. 31, 1839.—Four or five hundred miles from my home, in a land of entire strangers and I am told of *very wicked* people; English, Scotch, and Irish principally; no

minister in the place, and not even a church; but few members of any church, and of those few but a small number who we have reason to believe possess vital godliness. Desolation reigns. What may be my success in trying to do good among them, I am utterly at a loss to conjecture. A sermon about twenty minutes long, once in four weeks, is all the regular preaching they have. They come out to no evening meetings, nor do I know as they can be persuaded to do so. Many of the people are given to drink. One part of the settlement seems to be filled with infidelity; the leading man among them is an infidel, and extremely licentious; many are dependent on him. They are seldom, and some of them, I have been told, are never seen at meeting. Yet Christ has here a few humble, devoted, praying people, and may God of his infinite mercy answer their prayers."

"SABBATH, Sept. 1, 1839.—The meeting-house built of logs. About sixty people came together to hear the word of God—were very attentive, morning and evening. Some were in tears while I spoke to them of a judgment to come. People seem glad to see me. Very few of my own countrymen to be found; perhaps three or four out of fifty or sixty."

"SEPT. 2.—I have been visiting this afternoon. Find scarcely an American, almost all Scotch and Irish. Though they are not like Americans, yet most

of them are well disposed; but their manners, habits, and language are so different, that I easily realize I am in a strange land. As for religion, many of them know nothing about it, though there are some very intelligent Scotch, formerly in better circles in Scotland. The Lord only knows whether I shall be of any use to them."

"SEPT. 8.—A great many at church to-day. House almost full. Great solemnity. Truth seems to be getting hold of their consciences. The old Scotchmen drink in the truth. I spoke to them in the morning with great plainness. Brought out and exposed their sins, and showed them by the Bible, that such as indulged them *could not be saved.* I expected to offend them, but they bore it much better than I anticipated. Tried to do it tenderly. Seriousness begins to pervade them. They begin to *converse* about divine things, and have even gone so far as to appoint a prayer-meeting, a thing which has before been attempted in vain. O that the Lord would condescend to make bare his arm, pour out his Spirit, and bring back poor lost souls to himself."

"SEPT. 9.—Two inquiring sinners have been in this morning, and give some evidence of a change of heart. A general seriousness begins to pervade the people, and the word of God is attended with great power. One family have all come out to the meetings, closing their house, which it is said they have

never done before. It is truly wonderful to see what effects are produced by but a little of God's truth. The Spirit seems to fasten it home. O that God may do his own work in his own way."

"SEPT. 10.—More persons at the prayer-meeting than I expected. A number are inquiring with solicitude, 'Lord, what shall I do to be saved?' and some seem to feel that they have consecrated themselves to God. Many Christians are much quickened. They not only have a prayer-meeting, but some six or eight females have resolved to commence one. Some of the most respectable and intelligent heads of families seem to be much affected, and those whom it was supposed would be most backward. Several came from Paisley this evening, three of whom were inquiring sinners."

"SEPT. 11.—Many begin to feel deeply, and cry out with earnestness, 'What shall I do to be saved?' One old man particularly is deeply distressed, and feels that he has robbed God. O that he may meekly bow to Christ. He has long been a member of the church of Scotland, but I believe he is now beginning to feel for the first time that he is a poor, needy, lost sinner. O that God would speak peace to his soul, and bring him out a little child, humble, teachable, devoted, Christlike."

"SEPT. 12.—People begin to ply me with arguments to stay with them at least until spring. Some

think it impossible that I have yet three years to study. They present various considerations, which I confess I find it hard to resist. They bid me look at their condition—no regular preaching, wickedness prevailing; then they speak of their unanimity, and plead the peculiarity of the Scotch, Irish, English, and Americans, and say that even if they can get another to labor among them, he may overthrow all the good that has been done; a part may like him and the rest not. They appeal to my sense of duty. They wish me not to decide at once, to think of it, to pray over it. O that they would look to God instead of man. He can send them a minister after his own heart."

Alluding to his prayer for the conversion of one hundred souls at the commencement of the last number of his diary, he says, "Had I been *faithful*, I have no doubt God would have made me thus useful. But alas, my barrenness. God would have me bring forth *much* fruit. I feel that I have neglected many precious opportunities, now lost for ever. Surely I am an unprofitable servant. O that I may hereafter have more of the spirit of my Master, who went about doing good. May I have more of his humility, more of his love—undying, quenchless love for souls."

"Sept. 15.—Great numbers at church to-day. This afternoon the seats nearly filled, though it rained. This morning the chapel crowded to excess.

Many came three or four miles, and some even farther. All were attentive and solemn as the truth was spoken and the great worth of the soul brought to view. Many a tear told the feelings of the heart. O that God would speak. Then would they hear and live. Christians seem somewhat revived and strengthened."

"SEPT. 16.—Mr. B. prayed in his family last night for the first time. He has formerly been a deist, and though one of the most intelligent men of the place, yet he would cavil, and even swear. He took the Bible last evening, and read those passages which he had formerly cavilled at and openly denied, confessed before his family that they were true, and explained their meaning. He read and talked a long while, weeping all the time. His daughter, though pious, could hardly believe her own eyes and ears. Every one is greatly surprised. His wife has been a bad-tempered woman, but she is said to be greatly changed. Two persons from the tannery went as usual to the tavern for liquor, but the tavern-keeper sent them off, telling them that he would sell no more liquor on the Sabbath: one step I hope towards something better. Scarcely ever before has he been known to go out to meeting, but yesterday he attended morning and afternoon, and is said to have felt deeply. A woman walked two or three miles this morning to inquire about the salvation of

her soul. Though she has long been a member of the kirk of Scotland, yet she says she feels herself to be a poor lost sinner, and never has felt so before. Surely the Spirit of the Lord is in the midst of this people. O that they may come to Christ and live."

"SEPT. 18.—A great many at meeting last evening, even old Mr. L., whose face I never expected to see in the chapel."

He next mentions a visit to a place called Westleyville, where he found a congregation of about sixty persons, and says many of them had intended coming over to his meetings on the Sabbath, but were prevented by the rain. He speaks of a young lady as "determined by the grace of God to devote her life hereafter to his service." The people wished him to stay, and many who had never before been out to the meetings attended. He says, likewise, that he sent word to another place, which he called the hotbed of iniquity, that "if they would appoint a meeting," he would hold one there; to which they returned an answer that they would. Speaking of them he observes, "They work on the Sabbath; the proprietor is said to be an extremely bad character." The leading men are described as infidels, and many of Paine's and Fanny Wright's works were circulated and read there. He writes, "Heard the other day that they were *dreading* me, and went up among them visiting. As they were probably expecting me

to begin to argue and pull down their opinions, I said nothing on the subject—let it alone, and made a pleasant visit among them; and the next evening quite a number came down to the meeting."

He alludes also to some things which he feared would divert them from the truth; mentions other conversions, and notices the meetings as crowded, and then his record at this place breaks off abruptly, so that we are in ignorance of the further results of his labors. Probably he left there in time to commence his theological studies at the beginning of the usual term, as we next find him at the Yale Theological Seminary, October 28, 1839.

In his entry of this date, after mentioning that he had given a five dollar gold piece to the cause of benevolence, he says, "Do not know as I have done right, as I owe some money which ought to be paid in the course of a few months. But I *found* this on the walk, and it seemed as if I had a right to give it away. If necessary, I can pay all by selling my books.

"Set apart this day for fasting, humiliation, and prayer, in reference to the tract district and personal holiness. I need far more of the spirit of my Master. I feel that I am living at a poor dying rate. O that I may be more holy, and be the means of leading many to Christ."

His next entry shows his solicitude as to the field

of his future labors, and refers all to the disposal of the great Head of the church.

"Nov. 17.—O, when my mind really takes hold of the great and rapidly increasing West, it seems as if I should be doing wrong to go to Canada. Were it not for the fact that people will go west who will not go to Canada, and that Canada is almost entirely overlooked, I should not think of it. But why do I thus think so much of the field of my labor? Perhaps the good Shepherd will take me home before three years have passed away."

During the winter vacation he was again occupied in laboring in a revival. Thus he says,

"Feb. 4, 1840.—For the last few days I have been attending a meeting at North Haven. The Lord seems to be doing a great work there."

To the fidelity and success of his labors in North Haven, to which he thus briefly and modestly alludes, the Rev. Leverett Griggs, then the pastor, bears the following testimony.

"My acquaintance with brother Porter commenced during an extensive and powerful revival of religion among the people of my charge. Hearing of the religious interest that existed here, he came to enjoy the scenes, and see if he could be of any service in social meetings. The church were assembled for prayer the hour he arrived. Without any introduction, he entered the meeting and took part with the

brethren. His frank, open, warm, and generous heart made many friends almost immediately. He spent several weeks in the place, when the revival was at its height, and visited us frequently for many months afterwards. Whenever he was here he was abundant in labors, attending prayer-meetings and conferences, and conversing from house to house.

"His efforts were blessed to many souls. His instrumentality was very important in increasing and perpetuating a proper state of feeling in the church. He became familiarly acquainted with nearly all its members, and with most of the young converts. They loved him much, as they had reason to do; for they had been greatly interested and benefited by his labors. In consequence of his efforts many professors were quickened, some impenitent persons awakened and converted, and almost all the young converts received such useful instructions from him publicly and in private, that the name of Charles H. Porter will be held by them in everlasting remembrance.

"While speaking of his labors among my people, I must not omit to mention his teachable disposition, and the deference he uniformly paid to the ministry. All his movements were calculated to strengthen my hands and cheer my heart, and increase the attachment existing between the pastor and the people. He manifested no desire to take the direction of affairs, but was always ready to receive counsel, and

serve wherever he could be rendered useful. He had a passion for doing good; his heart was full of benevolence; it shone in his countenance, and marked his life daily. I scarcely ever met with one who does with his might 'whatsoever his hand findeth to do,' in such a degree as did brother Porter. 'He was a burning and shining light.'"

About this time Mr. Porter mentions that for some weeks he had been attending a meeting in New Haven on Saturday afternoons, to pray for a blessing on the tract distribution, and for a revival of religion. Finally several of the tract distributers commenced a meeting once a week in a very wicked neighborhood. These meetings were doubled, so that they met twice a week, and a revival was the consequence. "Some eight or ten, perhaps more, in that district, hope they have found a Saviour."

He was also engaged a part of the time in a revival of religion at Wallingford. In a letter to a friend, written from North Haven, he says,

"I ought, in such a favorable situation as this, to grow in grace. I can be of little, *very* little use without it. You know I have but little natural talent, and all that I can ever hope to accomplish must be through divine grace alone. Therefore pray that God may use me for his own glory. He can bless small talents, if fully consecrated to his service. May the Lord Jesus reign supreme in our hearts."

In April he seems to have been somewhat depressed, as he thus writes, at the beginning of this month, "Alas, alas, where am I? I feel that for months I have been straying from the Lord. My time has been wasted, my devotions have been too much neglected and irregular, and my heart hard. God has been heaping favors upon me, and I have been ungrateful. A miserable minister should I make with such a heart. O that I may begin anew. Lord, aid me in cultivating holiness."

His next entry is May 15, 1840. "Revival still continues at North Haven. Conversions occurring almost every week. Several have indulged hope within the last two weeks. Brother G.," the pastor, "sick, and I am worn down. Leave soon, to be gone a fortnight. My purse runs very low, but God can provide." God did provide; for, in a letter a few weeks after, he says, "Twelve dollars were handed me this day by brother G. of W. It was entirely unexpected, but exceedingly welcome."

He again speaks of his "thoughts turning towards Canada;" says he "awoke before three o'clock thinking of it, and could not sleep again;" longs "to know God's will, to be blessed with a deeper work of grace" in his heart, and to have "a closer walk with God;" mourns over his inward corruption, and prays earnestly for humility as a crowning grace in which he feels himself greatly deficient; and adds,

that his soul "sweetly melted at the idea of Christ's death for the ungodly," and at his own infinite obligations to his Saviour.

In a letter to a friend who was in poor health, dated July 30, he says, "How well it is that we do not hold our destinies in our own hands. If we are disappointed, our hopes wither, and we fade as a leaf; but God is not disappointed, and he sees that our afflictions, which for the present are not joyous but grievous, will afterwards yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby. Pray for a spirit which is contented to be sick. It requires more grace to be patient and willing to be sick, than to be active in the cause of Christ when well; and I have sometimes thought that perhaps God afflicts his children to show to worldlings the excellency of a religion which can make them happy even in adverse circumstances. This carries to the heart of the worldling the truth of the excellency of religion. It shows him that he has nothing to compare with it, and leads him perhaps unaccountably to respect if not desire it. Sickness affords an opportunity to exercise many graces which are not called forth in health; and it is often observed that those who are ripest for heaven are those who have been through the fiery furnace. Who knows but some part of our character which will afford us the highest happiness in heaven, must be developed

by afflictions on earth. And how much more deeply can they sympathize with Christ, who receive a portion of such afflictions on earth as he endured; for 'he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.' He knows well how to sympathize with you, for 'he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust.' 'As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' If we feel so deeply for you, how, think you, does Christ feel? What a blessing to have such a Friend to whom we can go."

In a little more than a year, the person addressed stood beside Mr. Porter's dying bed.

A day or two after, Mr. Porter writes again to the same friend. "The Lord permitted me this morning to enjoy one of the most sweet and refreshing seasons with which I have been favored for a long time. I felt that I could give myself to him entirely, and let him do with me as he pleased. It seems to me that it would be the severest trial that could befall me, to be shut out from preaching the gospel. But I hope I can say, '*Thy* will be done.' It seems as if it would be the greatest privilege God could bestow to allow me to preach. I can hardly realize that he will permit me, so mean, so defiled with sin, so ignorant of his will, to stand in the pulpit and proclaim salvation to a lost world. Pray for me, that I may be baptized of the Holy Ghost. Some-

times I long to get out, and were it not for the deep consciousness of my almost entire unfitness for the work, nothing that I know of would stop me. I have felt to-day like a bird with its wings clipped and caged for two years in order to give the feathers time to grow."

A few extracts from letters to friends may partially supply the deficiency created by the want of entries in his diary at this period. The first year of his theological education was closed, and he had commenced his second. In writing to his friend D., in answer to the question, "How do you succeed?" he says,

"Nov. 17, 1840.—I hardly know what to say. As to my piety, I feel sensibly that I have but little. I am poorly qualified to preach the gospel of Jesus, as I expect soon to do. My soul needs to lean far more on the Beloved; I need to learn of him, to walk with him, to be imbued with his Spirit, and to be filled with his grace. I think I have desires for more holiness, and that I love to commune with Jesus, and that I try to walk with him. Yet I am ashamed of myself, and feel miserably qualified for the great work before me. Yet *God* can help. I have little, very little confidence in human learning without the teachings of the Spirit. Learning, and talents, and eloquence are but vanity without the power of God to seal the truths of his word on the hearts and consciences of men. I have no hope of

doing good without the constant presence and assistance of that great Being in whose cause I am engaged; but with his almighty aid, surely much may be done. When therefore, dear brother, you pray for me, pray that I may be clothed with humility, be filled with his Spirit, and live in such a way that God can, through me, accomplish his purposes in the salvation of men."

From a letter to another friend in New York, dated December 10, 1840, we take a few extracts. After thanking him for his timely aid, he says, "Never have I been so pressed for means as since I entered the Theological seminary. Yet the Lord has dealt bountifully with me." Alluding to a severe bereavement which his friend had suffered, he expresses his sympathy, and says,

"We have the richest consolation in the death of your dear wife. She is now, as we hope, singing the songs of Zion; yes, tuning her golden harp to praise King Immanuel; and for ought we know, she may be looking forward to the happy period when she will hail you as having passed the dark valley, and ready to unite with her in singing the songs of redeeming love. She may even now be ministering to your wants. She may witness your deep affliction, and see how it is working out for you 'a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' As we know not exactly how mind acts on mind, and as we are many

times influenced by other minds, who have themselves premeditated and brought about a given course of action, while we, it may be, thought the whole execution our own; so *perhaps* those who have gone to heaven may influence us, may in some way present motives which will lead us to a certain course of action. It is *possible* that the angels who watch over souls, and carry back the glad tidings to heaven of a sinner's conversion, and the great cloud of witnesses, Heb. 12 : 1, who were once saints on earth, Heb. 11, may influence us; and it is possible that your dear companion, who is now one of that 'great cloud of witnesses,' may be watching over and blessing you. Whether this be so or not, there is One who is far superior, far better—even JESUS—who watches over you; and, dear brother, though he try you in the deep furnace of affliction, yet it is best, to purify and purge away the dross, and fit you for heaven. Those who have no afflictions may be backward to leave earth; but the deeper the trials, the more exceedingly precious will be the delivery from them."

On the occasion of the same death, Mr. Porter addressed a letter to the mother of the deceased.

"Gone to rest. Happy spirit! O what a treasure have you now in heaven. Did you love before to think of Jesus, of the spirits of the just made perfect in heaven? methinks you now have an addi-

tional treasure there. The shepherd, when he cannot drive his sheep from the lowlands to the mountain tops to feed, can easily cause them to follow him, by taking a lamb in his arms and leading the way. So with the great Shepherd of Israel. If he find that we love to dwell *below*, he can soon call us upward in our thoughts and feelings, by transplanting a lamb into the paradise of God. Yes, my dear sister, I believe that God cuts off these creature comforts, that our pathway to the tomb may be more easy, that we may have a more ardent attachment to the heavenly world, that our feelings may be subdued, and that we may by these trials be the better prepared for the rest which remaineth for the people of God.

"I am glad to mingle my sympathies and prayers with yours on this occasion. There is another also who will sympathize with you. It is He who wept at the grave of Lazarus; He who hath 'borne our griefs and carried our sorrows,' who was 'wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.' Yes, Jesus will sympathize with you, and you will not be forgotten by the holy One of Israel; for, 'like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' And he will never 'afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.' Nor will he be unmindful of our frailty, for 'he remembereth that we are dust.'"

An interesting letter to his friend D—— bears date, New Britain, Dec. 18, 1840. He writes,

"You may ask why I am here. About three weeks since, a revival commenced in this place, and has been peculiarly interesting for about two weeks. How many conversions there have been I am unable to say, but the number is large, and there are many anxious. The pastor being in feeble health, sent to the seminary for assistance. Dr. Taylor recommended the young man to apply to me. Accordingly I have come here to spend a few days in a most interesting work of grace. I shall not probably remain more than a week, if I do as long."

"Dec. 19.—I spent the forenoon yesterday in visiting from house to house in one of the outer districts. I found some converts, and many either thoughtful or anxious. At half past two they met in a schoolhouse. I talked to them about the judgment. The house was very full, and the people solemn; many tears fell, and it was manifest that God was there. In the evening a meeting was appointed for those who had lately hoped, and those who were anxious. It appears that the interest has greatly increased within a week, for upon the same evening of last week but about thirty were present, and last evening there were about seventy. They were of all classes and ages, though not many were above forty or fifty years old. There were many young men, heads of

families, and some of the most respectable and influential in the place. Many feel deeply, and we hope that the Holy Spirit will lead them to Christ."

After answering some inquiries of his friend respecting his pecuniary wants, he adds,

"After all, I consider these trials as nothing, absolutely nothing, in comparison with the great object before me. I am really quite ashamed to speak of them. I would cheerfully undergo all, and a hundred times more, to have the inestimable and *glorious* privilege of laboring for my dear Redeemer. Floods of tears roll down my cheeks as I think of being permitted to labor as an ambassador in his vineyard. Oh, how I bless the Lord my God for leading me to that decision. Next to the period when I gave my soul to Christ, I count that the most sacred and blessed moment of my life, in which I consecrated myself to the great work of the ministry. It was a great struggle to give up for ever the idea of wealth, of ease, of worldly comfort; to think of being dependent on charity for nine long years, and of living in poverty all my life; but O, the blessedness of that moment! Never, *never* have I regretted it. My peace has at times flowed like a river, and God has been pleased—O yes, I desire to say it in humility and praise—my God has been pleased greatly to bless my poor efforts to do his will. I weep as I think of his wonderful kindness, of his great conde-

scension. It seems wonderful that he should so signally bless one so poorly qualified to labor for him, one so sinful; but, praise to his name, he has blessed me, and seldom has he permitted me to labor a single week in a place without giving me souls for my hire. It makes me ashamed, to think of my deep ingratitude and the poor returns which I have made to him; but O, it comforts me to think that God loves his dear Son, and though we are infinitely unworthy, yet, for his sake, he will be pleased to bless us. It is a great, great comfort that God can use 'the weak things of this world to confound the mighty.' I am conscious of the inferiority of my natural talents. I am aware that many of my brethren have far superior, and I bless God for it. I ask for not one more than I have. All I ask is, that he will give me grace properly to *improve* them. Feeling thus, it is a great comfort to think he can make use of them, though feeble, to promote his glory."

On entering another, and, as it proved, the last year of his life, his feelings seem to have turned with increased strength to the conversion of his parents and relatives. In a letter to his father, dated, "Hartford, Jan. 7, 1841," he writes,

"My dearly beloved Father—You are probably aware, that ever since my conversion to God, I have had great anxiety for my beloved friends. My

prayers have ascended day and night for their conversion. I acknowledge that I have not prayed as much as I ought, or as earnestly as I might, nor have I had that faith in God which I ought; yet, by his grace, I will continue to pray for them, but for you in particular. Morning, evening, and at noon, will I pray to God that he will convert your soul to himself. You have ever been to me a kind father; and, excepting pious instruction, the best of fathers. I hope ever to return a grateful heart, but can never hope to repay the trouble which I have cost you.

"I know not what I can do better, or how to make a better return, than to ask my heavenly Father to bless you, to give you a new heart, to shed abroad his Holy Spirit upon your soul, to give you the unspeakable consolations of religion. I hope soon to see a *new family in Christ;* to see my dear father, whose locks are whitened with more than threescore years, taking the Bible from its long repose, reading the word of God to his family, kneeling before the mercy-seat in the midst of them, and imploring pardon and a blessing. Oh, I imagine that, by the eye of faith, I behold the joy of a family redeemed. Yes, God is faithful, and in him I trust. My dear, *dear* father, shall not God be praised in our family? As ever, I remain,

"Your affectionate and beloved son,

"CHARLES."

These extracts have been introduced not only as descriptive of Mr. Porter's tender faithfulness to those whom he loved, and who he feared were still unreconciled to God, but in the hope that those alike who knew him, or who were strangers and who may read these pages, may breathe forth their prayer for the object on which his heart was so much set—the spiritual welfare of his friends at home. His own lips are now sealed in silence; but the record of his feelings may be the means, through the prayers of others, of bringing to pass that dearest wish of his heart.

In another long letter, dated Jan. 27, 1841, he urges the subject again on his father's attention, and uses the most earnest expostulation to induce him to examine it as it deserved. He says, in closing,

"Alas, alas, that a child should take the place of a parent; but O, I must do it, and entreat you by the deathless interests of your own immortal soul; by the value of the souls which God hath committed to your charge, and for which you must give an account; by all that is dear for time and eternity, that you will neglect this subject no longer. Forgive me, if I have said any thing to wound your feelings, but I do plead most earnestly, that you will not reject the salvation which has been purchased by the blood of the Son of God. Oh, my father, my *father*, can you reject Jesus Christ, that blessed Saviour, who for

the sins of men has bled and died? Will you refuse to worship in your family that God on whom you are dependent for every breath you draw, and for every blessing you enjoy?"

About the same time, probably, as the letter is not dated, he wrote a long letter to his mother, full of argument and counsel, and the most urgent and affectionate entreaty. He concludes this letter in these words:

"For months, if I mistake not, have I borne our beloved family on my heart to God in prayer, morning and evening; nor do I mean to cease till they are either converted to God, or we are laid cold and lifeless in the tomb.

"Believe me to retain, as ever, the most deep, sincere, and ardent affection for my beloved mother; and may God permit us yet to reign together, heirs of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, during the ceaseless ages of eternity.

"CHARLES H. PORTER."

There was now evidently a growing earnestness in his endeavors to become fitted for the great work before him. He felt that ere long he must come forth as a commissioned servant of God to preach to dying souls. He had a deep sense of the responsibility under which he was to be placed, and trembled at the thought of his own deficiency. In a letter to a friend to whom he was accustomed to unveil his feelings

in the most intimate manner, dated Hartford, Jan. 18, he writes,

"I think that I am learning slowly how to live. I have not studied the word of God sufficiently. The key to the proper study of the Bible is found in Proverbs 2 : 1–6. I have not taken up religion as the great, only, and all-absorbing subject, and read my Bible and sifted it, and 'cried after knowledge,' and 'searched,' as I ought. Alas, how can I ever be a minister of Christ? I must make it my business to follow the leadings of the Spirit, learn God's word, and how to apply it to the hearts of men; and why may not God make use of me in the salvation of thousands?

"Alas, I know I am a worm; a poor, weak vessel. But God is pleased to use the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; and I am more and more convinced, that it does not require great talents to convert this world to God. No, only let the common talent be consecrated to God, and he can work mightily to the pulling down of strong holds. O, that the few talents the Lord has been pleased to give me, may be entirely consecrated to his service; then I am certain, that he could greatly use them to his glory. I never can be the instrument of leading thousands to Christ without great consecration. O, that I might be so filled with love to God, have so ardent an attachment to the blessed Jesus and to

poor dying souls, that all my time, all my talents, all my bodily and mental powers shall be entirely and for ever devoted to his service."

In Mr. Porter's next letter to his friend D——, Feb. 10, 1841, acknowledging the receipt of clothing and money, for which he is most grateful, he says, "I have for many months groped in darkness, not knowing which way to turn, and sometimes thinking that I should have to relinquish months and perhaps a year or more of study; but I have reason to bless the Lord that he has permitted me the prospect of *completing* my studies. You know I have always been an advocate for a thorough course, and I have no reason to regret that I have prosecuted mine, beginning at the foundation, though it requires some patience, and makes me rather old." "Time is flying; and what I do must be done quickly. A few short years, and we shall be standing before God in judgment."

In a letter to the same friend, dated March 22, he says,

"My health is hardly as good as usual. My strength has been exhausted in revivals of religion. When I returned from Hartford, I was requested to give the Park-street church, in New Haven, an account of the revival. I did so. They then wished a meeting the next evening. I consented. Then they wished another; and so on, through the week. At

the close of the week, God seemed evidently to be in the midst of us; the church seemed to feel so, and some were serious and inquiring what they should do to be saved. Soon, a little boy was indulging a hope; also a medical student, and a class-mate who graduated with me; but my throat became sore, and the doctor said I must give up laboring altogether."

He then speaks of the powerful revival which was in progress in the city, by which multitudes—infidels, Universalists, drunkards, and gamblers even—were awakened and turned to God. Of his health, he adds, "I apprehend nothing serious. If I could be contented to rest a little by and by, I think my system would be restored to its accustomed elasticity. If I am careful, I presume I shall find no further difficulty." He writes also, that he had been expecting to get a license to preach, but that on further conversation with his instructors he concluded to delay it till the regular time, the next summer. It must have been a severe trial to Mr. Porter to be so laid aside from successful labor, at a time when there was so general an interest in the subject of religion.

The following extracts are from a letter to his mother, dated March 26:

"My dearly beloved Mother—It seems as if every revolving year increased my affection for you. It may be only because I become more sensible of the affection which has always existed. I have been

expecting to visit home in a few days, but I shall probably now postpone it till vacation. My pecuniary affairs are in a better state than they have been for years. I have received this winter and spring about a hundred and seventy-five dollars, which has more than paid off all my debts. A hundred and fifty dollars of this I may perhaps return, if I ever get able; but if not, it will not be required.

"My health I do not think as good as usual. One reason is, that I have been somewhat exhausted in revivals, and another undoubtedly is, that 'I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart for my brethren, my kindred according to the flesh.' Romans, chap. 9." He proceeds as usual with the most tender and urgent expostulation, laboring as one who must give account of himself to God—with great plainness and seriousness setting forth the truth as it is in Christ, and manifesting how deeply he longed to have those whom he loved, sharers in the same belief and blessings which were his own.

"April 4.—Enjoyed this day one of the sweetest communion seasons, if not the very sweetest, that I have ever enjoyed; even sweeter, if possible, than in the days of my espousals to Christ. My intercourse with God for some weeks has been greatly increasing. Sweet, heavenly peace has frequently filled my heart. I have nevertheless felt totally unworthy to preach the gospel; and it seems frequently

as if God could not honor me so highly as to let me preach and win souls to him. A great revival is now in progress in this city. Hundreds have already indulged hope; perhaps fifty or sixty in college; many hardened, abandoned infidels in town are also converted."

In all these scenes Mr. Porter rejoiced greatly, and bore an active part. He spent his vacation in his native place, where he sought with more than usual activity to make his influence felt as a Christian, and to awaken a deeper interest in the people of God. After having obtained the concurrence of the pastor of the church, he attended and led in some neighborhood conferences and prayer-meetings. But he was too much exhausted to prosecute his design, and was obliged to abandon it.

On May 3d, he writes to a friend, from Norwich, "Pray for me, for I greatly need your prayers. I never recollect having felt such trials; I never have been borne down with a sense of the worth of precious immortal souls as I have for those in this parish. It has seemed sometimes as if I should sink, for it may almost be said by every impenitent man, 'No man careth for my soul?' Perhaps you say, 'What do you intend to do?' I intend, by the grace of God, 'in the morning to sow the seed, and in the evening to withhold not the hand, inasmuch as I know not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether

both shall be alike good.' Mine is the labor, the result is God's."

In a letter to his friend D——, June 12, Mr. Porter mentions a project—which he had been for some time maturing, and to which he had made occasional allusions—of devoting himself to missionary service in Iowa. He says,

"I am thinking of being licensed about the first of next month; then I hope to study another month or six weeks; after which, for two or three months, I should be glad to supply some pulpit." "I should be glad to have you inquire of Mr. Badger respecting home missions. I have been thinking of late of going to the West, perhaps the *far* West, beyond the Mississippi, to Iowa. I might possibly, if absolutely necessary, go this fall, though the strong probability is, that if I go, I shall not leave before spring. Is it probable that next spring a missionary will be wanted for Iowa? If so, at what place, etc.? I have thought that I should like to devote some time in preaching on home missions, till the people get interested in the subject. It seems to me that New England is all asleep in regard to home missions. It rejoices my soul to hear that the Society are going to try to raise $50,000 more this year than the last. I wish it could be $500,000; and if the people of New England felt half the obligation which rests upon them, they would give it. It seems to me, that

unless Christians of this country are willing to sacrifice much to preserve our religious privileges and hand them down to posterity, God will overthrow our blessed institutions, and curse us with spiritual famine and desolation from one end of the land to the other.

"If the Lord should ever see fit to send me to the West, I have been thinking whether there are not twenty merchants who would combine to give twenty dollars each to support me, and whether, by such an example, twenty more might not soon be found to support another, and twenty mechanics to support another, and so on; or whether a church, or two or three churches, might not combine and send one. Might not some such plan be pursued, so that great multitudes might be sent who now stay here?

"I have not yet decided to go. It would be a very great grief to my dear parents and friends to have me go; but O, when I think of the coming myriads that are soon to pass through that great valley on their way to judgment, I ought to be willing to forsake father and mother, brother and sister, though it be like sundering the cords of life. My dear brother died, a year after graduating, hundreds of miles from his father's house, not one of his friends near him; and if I were to go, they might expect me soon to follow him; but I count not my life dear to me, as I humbly hope, if so be that I may win Christ, and souls to Christ."

Mr. Porter, with three fellow-students, was licensed to preach the gospel, July 28, 1841, by the Association of New London county. Speaking of this event, he writes, under this date, in his diary, "Thus, after eight years of continued study and labor, have I been permitted by the grace of God to enter on this holy calling. To it I have looked with great delight, and I would call on my soul and all that is within me to praise and bless his holy name. I feel, however, miserably qualified to discharge its responsible duties. I feel that I need more piety, more knowledge, more judgment, and, in short, more of every thing that constitutes a good and useful minister of the Lord Jesus Christ."

In confirmation of his sense of responsibility thus expressed, a friend says, "In his room I found attached to his book-case door, where he was in the habit of writing, the following sentence: 'In preparing sermons, let me never inquire what estimate men will put upon them now, but how God will regard them at the judgment-day.'"

Another says, "In the last interview I had with him before his being licensed to preach, observing how pale and feeble he looked, I urged him, with some degree of warmth, to take care of his health. 'If I should not live long,' said he, 'it will all be well;' and, after pausing a moment, he added, 'I FEEL THAT I HAVE BUT ONE OBJECT TO LIVE FOR, AND

THAT IS, TO TAKE AS MANY SOULS TO HEAVEN WITH ME AS I POSSIBLY CAN.'"

The Lord, however, saw fit to remove him just as he was stepping on the threshold of his profession.

A few records in his diary, and a short extract from a letter, are all that we have to add before we come to his death-bed. For some Sabbaths after his receiving a license, he preached in Terrysville. This must have been an interesting scene of labor for him. Here he had been the means of winning souls to Christ; this people had taken a deep interest in his success, and had been looking forward to the time when they should enjoy his services in leading their worship. Now that wish was gratified. The closing notices of his diary are all dated at this place. The entries, for the most part, are brief, but they show the labors in which he was engaged, and the subjects of his discourses.

"TERRYSVILLE, July 31.—Left Norwich 29th inst., and intended to have been here yesterday; but some of my friends in Hartford, who had formerly lived in West Hartford, urged me to go out there and preach last evening, as they had no minister. Preached from John 15 : 4, 'Abide in me.'"

"AUG. 1.—Preached in the morning from Acts 27 : 31, 'Except these abide in the ship,' etc.; afternoon, from Amos 6 : 1, 'Woe to them that are at ease in Zion.' All dead. Scarcely a conversion for

three years. Can learn of but two during that period.

"Aug. 3.—Tuesday evening meeting—pretty good number out. Preached from Heb. 13 : 17, 'They watch for souls.' Solemn, but nothing special. Have been writing during the forenoons on Heb. 2 : 3, 'How shall we escape,' etc. Visited some families in the afternoons. Find here and there a person serious.

"Aug. 5.—Preached this evening on Town-hill, from Eccl. 11 : 6, 'In the morning sow thy seed,' etc. Greatly favored—preached remarkably easy—quite a good number out.

"Aug. 6.—Preached at the centre school-house, from Titus 1 : 16, 'They profess that they know God,' etc. Room dark—body fatigued—dull.

"Aug. 7.—Finished sermon. Worked at it all the forenoons of the week, and a great part of the afternoons. Needs another week of labor to make it a decent sermon. Visited somewhat during the week—find a little seriousness. Some Christians are feeling more. Some begin to think about a revival.

"Aug. 8, 1841.—This day am thirty years of age. Is it *possible?* How time flies. A few days, and I am gone. Thirty years! *Perhaps* I may live *five* years more. Lord, so teach me to number my days that I may apply my heart unto wisdom. Preached from Heb. 2 : 3, in the morning. Very solemn; many tears, especially towards the close. Afternoon, sub-

ject, the rich man and Lazarus. More solemn and still. Tears all over the house. Some reason to hope that God is about to revive his work. Evening, preached from Prov. 28 : 13, 'He that covereth his sins,' etc. It was an awfully solemn time to many. O that God may break their hearts and lead them to himself. He only knows what he intends to do. O that he would send down the Holy Spirit, and do his own blessed work. One female professes to have given her heart to the Saviour. If it is so, to God be all the honor, praise, and glory, world without end. Amen.

"AUG. 9.—A meeting was appointed this evening for those who wished to converse particularly on the subject of religion. Eleven were present—all young. Nearly all felt deeply, and three or four, about sixteen or eighteen years of age, seemed to think they had consecrated themselves to the Lord. May the Lord preserve them, and lead them to be his sincere followers. A number are serious who were not present."

This is the last entry in Mr. Porter's diary. He left Terrysville soon after this on a visit to his brother, then residing in Syracuse, N. Y. His state of health probably rendered this necessary.

In giving an account of this visit, his brother says, "After taking tea on Friday evening, August 20, we went to a singing-school, and afterwards stepped into a temperance meeting, the first of the Washingtonian

efforts in that place. After reaching home, the bells rung for fire. We started, but, before reaching the place, turned to go home, as the fire seemed to be subsiding, when suddenly we heard *the explosion of gunpowder.*"

This was that dreadful event, the account of which was published at the time in the public journals, which occasioned the death of twenty-five persons. Mr. Porter preached on the evening of the following Sabbath, in the Rev. Dr. Lansing's church. The next week he left for New Haven. A short extract from a letter to a friend, dated at Cooperstown, Otsego county, Aug. 27, 1841, probably on his return, gives us his last record.

"O that we might always be submissive to our Father's will; that our thoughts and desires might all be in conformity to his sovereign pleasure. I have yet to learn the way of holiness. How poorly prepared am I to preach the gospel. Pray that I may be a workman rightly dividing the word of truth, and that I may win souls to Christ."

Mr. Porter, on his arrival at New York, made some appointments to preach, but was suddenly called to New Haven by the sickness of a friend. He there took cold, while watching with a sick child. This was followed by a dysentery, from which he never recovered. The account of his sickness and death will be given in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CLOSING SCENE.

We have thus traced Mr. Porter from his entrance into the fold of Christ, through the difficulties he had to encounter in his preparatory, collegiate, and theological studies, to his becoming a commissioned servant of the Redeemer. We have seen him beginning to preach the gospel in public, and maturing his plans to become a missionary to the far west. We now come to his sick-bed and dying hour.

There is a natural desire in the human bosom to know how a fellow-being dies. The death-bed is ever a solemn place where lessons may be gathered for the living; and that of the Christian especially presents scenes that sometimes border on heaven. It is not the privilege of all to rise triumphantly in raptures of delight and with visions of glory full before them, or to sink calmly to rest, undisturbed by pain, and peaceful as the infant's slumber. There is the aching brow, the painful sense of debility, and the distracted mind, from which even the child of God is not exempted. Nor is it necessary that a peaceful and quiet death-bed, or a scene of surpassing triumph in the last hour, should crown the well-spent life. Whitefield, in reference to his dying testimony, once remarked that he had *preached Christ* a *living* tes-

timony. Such had been the aim, in all his labors, of Charles H. Porter.

The closing scene of Mr. Porter's life, however, was deeply interesting. Two accounts have been furnished by different individuals, both of which will here be given. The former of these is somewhat general, and traces the progress of the disease till its fatal termination; the latter is a fuller and more particular description of the state of his mind during his illness and in the prospect of death.

"Mr. Porter returned to New Haven from New York, Saturday evening, September 4, 1841. The week following, and the next week until Friday, he spent with sick friends in New Haven and North Haven, and with gratitude saw them recovering from the borders of the grave. On Friday he began to complain of illness, and on Saturday, Sept. 18, was obliged to take his bed. His disease—dysentery—at first assumed a very mild form.

"On Wednesday morning, the 22d, there appeared to be a great excitement of the nervous system, which caused much suffering, and continued in a greater or less degree until Friday afternoon, the 24th, when it increased so much as for three hours to deprive him of reason. His mind at this time seemed occupied with the work to which he had consecrated himself. His desire was to preach, and his efforts to do

it so great as entirely to exhaust his remaining strength.

"On Wednesday he first spoke of his situation as being one of danger. Viewing it thus, he said, 'Had I served Christ as I ought, my disease would not give me any anxiety.' When asked if it did, he replied, 'Not much.'"

A friend who spent the day with him on Thursday, thus writes: "On Thursday morning I found Mr. Porter so low from faintness as to be unable to converse. After some time he said, in a low whisper, 'I will talk with you as soon as I have recovered from my faintness.' About an hour after, finding he was somewhat revived, I asked him if he thought he should recover. He replied, 'I have thought so, but I do not feel as well this morning; yet the doctor speaks encouragingly, and I think, with good care, I shall soon be better.'

"He was rather restless until two o'clock P. M., when he fell asleep and slept quietly for about ten minutes. He awoke in great distress, sprang up in the bed, and said he was dying. He called for some members of the family, who came immediately into the room, when he bade them farewell, said he was called unexpectedly away, but added, 'It is all right; I only desire to live to preach the gospel, but God knows what is best.' I said to him, 'I think you are not dying, and I hope that the Lord has work for you

to do on earth; if so, he will raise you up.' He replied with much earnestness, and with a countenance more expressive than language, 'God has work in heaven for his children.' I said, 'There is a world to be converted through human instrumentality, and I hope you will be spared to labor for its conversion.' He replied, 'I have unconverted friends for whom I have labored and prayed, but without effect, and my death may be the means employed for their conversion; if so, I shall not die in vain.' He then left a message for his parents, brother, and sisters.

"During the evening, as he lay with his eyes closed, apparently asleep, I remarked to a friend sitting with me, that Mr. Porter had not left his work to be done when he entered the ministry, but had labored during all his preparatory course. He opened his eyes, and said, 'It was poor labor, but God has accepted it.'

"At another time he said, 'Tell my parents I am not sorry I prepared for the ministry. I commenced my studies without knowing how I should get along; but God has raised me up friends in a wonderful manner. I have always been provided for; and if God calls me away just as I am ready to preach, it is because it is best.'

"I called again on Saturday and found him failing. Upon my inquiring how he felt, he replied, 'Not as well as I was when you left me yesterday

morning. I think God designs to take me home soon.' 'Has death any terrors to you?' 'No, not any. I rely on the merits of Christ alone. I have no righteousness of my own.'

"On Sabbath morning as I entered his chamber he gave me his hand with a smile, and in reply to my inquiry how he was, he said, 'Slightly better than I was yesterday, but a great deal better than I was that dreadful Friday.' His recollection of those hours was painful in the extreme. He feared lest he had said and done things that would do hurt—that were dishonorable to religion. The assurance that he was not accountable for what he did at that time, seemed to impart relief and comfort: 'I knew God would not lay it up against me, but was afraid of the effect upon those present.' He spoke of its being the Sabbath, listened with emotion and apparent pleasure to the ringing of the church-bells, and remarked, 'I shall enjoy the day, because it is the Sabbath.' Through the day he lay far more quiet than on any preceding day, entering into no conversation except as necessity required.

"About half past five P. M. he suddenly raised himself in bed and desired to walk across the floor, but as suddenly lay back again, when it was evident that death had fastened his icy hand upon him, and congealed the fountain of life; the silver cord was loosed, the golden bowl breaking, the spirit fluttering

on the confines of time, the threshold of eternity. For two hours he remained insensible, at the close of which he revived, and like Bunyan's pilgrim, when about half way through the Jordan of death, he stood awhile and talked to his companions that had waited upon him thither. Precious moments were they to those gathered in that chamber of death, and the remembrance of them is sweet. After those hours of converse he again became insensible, and about half past eleven his spirit returned to Him who gave it.

"Carrying out the great desire of his life—to preach—he wished the words, 'PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD,' put upon his tombstone.

"Mr. Porter during his sickness gave directions concerning the disposal of his effects, making provision for the payment of his debts by the sale of his library, and designating a few volumes for friends."

The following account was furnished by a friend of Mr. Porter, who visited him several times during his sickness, and with whom he conversed more freely than with any one else. She had, through his course of study, been to him as a mother, and was deeply interested in all his pursuits and interests.

"In attempting to pen some of my recollections of the sick and dying bed of our dear departed friend, I feel how utterly unable I am to convey to others the interest I have felt. One must have seen his ani-

mated countenance, irradiated with the sweet smile of affection, and heard his heavenly expressions of joyful submission to the will of God, to have any adequate impressions of the scene. To repeat now his many words of comfort, peace, and joyful anticipation, seems almost a vain attempt. They came from his lips with such an *unction*, that to be permitted to breathe that atmosphere of light and love, seemed quite on the verge of heaven.

"As soon as I learned that he was in danger, I hastened to him. On my approach to his bedside, extending his hand, he said with a sweet smile, 'Ah, how good you are to come to me again. Are you able to sit by me to-day? I have much to say to you, as the Lord shall give me strength to say it.' I expressed my regret to see him worse, and said I thought that he was going to recover. 'I thought so too,' said he, 'when you were here the other day; but now I feel that God has other designs respecting me, than permitting me preach his gospel on earth. O, how I have longed to preach the glorious gospel, and try to save souls from death. You know how I have toiled, and labored, and prayed for it; and now, just as I was entering upon the work, my heavenly Father is going to lay me aside.' I said, 'I cannot think so; I trust this sickness is not unto death.' 'It may not be,' said he; 'but my prevailing impression is, that my work on earth is done. And if it is so,

I can say with all my heart, "Thy will, O God, be done." I rejoice to be in the hands of him who is infinite in wisdom, and who does all things well.'

"Seeing me much affected, he said, 'Do not distress yourself, you will be sick. Are you not willing that I should go home? O, the glories that await me in my Father's house. I would not live alway on earth; would you?' On my saying that I had hoped to trace his course for many years in the ministry, he replied, 'If God has any thing more for me to do on earth, be assured he will raise me up and send me forth to do it. If he has not, I do not wish to live. I have ever felt that I was utterly unworthy to preach the glorious gospel. I know, I feel, that God loves his cause infinitely more than I do, and he knows what will best advance its interests. And let us rejoice that all power is in his hands, and that he will put in requisition the best means for carrying on his purposes of love and mercy. He will raise up some other instrument that will do more than I should have done, and I do not wish to have it otherwise. I desire to lie in the hands of my heavenly Parent, like an infant in the hands of its mother. I have no will of my own. Let thy will, O God, be done, and I am more than satisfied, I rejoice in it. When I look back upon the way in which I have been led, I am filled with wonder, love, and praise. I have tried to acknowledge God in all

my ways, and he has indeed directed me in a way that I knew not. I came here a stranger, and knew not how I was to be provided for. He has raised me up friends and provided for all my wants. 'Surely there is no want to them that fear him.'

"I begged him to stop talking, and rest, as I feared that he would exhaust himself. With one of his sweet smiles, he looked me in the face and said, 'Do not say I must stop, for if *you say so*, I shall have to obey. But I feel no inclination to sleep, and I wish to say what I have to say, while I have strength: soon it will be too late. And now, will you hear what I wish to say about my worldly business; and will your dear husband and my dear Mr. L—— see that my wishes are attended to?' I assured him that they should be cared for.

"After giving his directions concerning them, he said, 'Now sit close here, and let me tell you what I want you to say to my dear, dear parents. O, how I do hope my life may hold out till they come. Will you pray, that if it is God's will, I may see them before I die. If I am gone before they get here, tell them how I love them, and that all I am troubled about on my death-bed respecting them is, that they are not the friends of my Saviour. None but God knows how I have desired their conversion. I feel that I have done all that I could do, and now must leave them with God. O, tell them my dying re-

quest is, that they would prepare to meet me in heaven. Oh, I cannot bear to think of their being lost. Could I feel that my father's family were the sincere followers of Jesus, how happy should I be.' After resting a few minutes, he said, 'Tell my dear mother how I wanted to see her. Tell her, that I believe God is going to take me to himself, and make my death the means of converting some or all of the dear family at home. I have often thought it would be easy to die, if it might lead them to repentance. I always loved my kindred, but never half so much as now.'

"The next morning he told me that he had got above that exceeding anxiety to see his parents. 'I can now rejoice,' said he, 'to leave that and every other care with my Saviour. If it is his will, I shall be glad to see them; if not, I can rejoice in that too, for I know he careth for me. All my cares I cast on him. I lean on his arm, I recline on his bosom. O the inexpressible sweetness of Jesus' love. It is true, it is more than true, that

> "Jesus can make a dying bed
> Feel soft as downy pillows are."

They tell us of the dark valley, but there is no darkness here. It is light and glorious. It seems as if light from the eternal throne streamed down and illuminated the whole scene around me. Every body and every thing seems lovely. O how I love you all! Did any poor unworthy creature ever have such friends?'

"After a fainting turn, when I applied some restorative, he said, 'I thought I was gone, but here I am still with you. How is it you know what I want without my having to tell you? But thus it has ever been that my Saviour has supplied all my need. Give my best love to J——. Tell her how much I thank her for all she has done for me. Tell her my Saviour will reward her, and though I do not live to do good, God will not let her lose her reward for all she has done from love to his cause. Tell her not to be discouraged nor tire in her labors of love, for in due season she shall reap a rich harvest, if she faint not.'

"At this time the Rev. Mr. Ludlow came in. 'I am glad to see you, brother Ludlow,' said he. 'I feel as if I had got almost home.' Said Mr. Ludlow, 'I cannot feel yet, as if you had done with earth. I think God will raise you up, and permit you to do much for him here before you will rest from your labors.' 'It is not impossible,' said he, 'I know, but I do not think it probable. One thing I know, it will be as I wish it to be, just as my heavenly Father pleases.' 'Brother Porter,' said Mr. Ludlow, 'it is sweet, is it not, to lean on the Saviour and commune with him?' 'Indeed, it is,' replied our friend, with a most delightful expression of countenance; 'and if such the stream, O what will the Fountain be, when I shall see him as he is, face to face, and serve him without

weariness and without sin? O when shall I awake in his likeness, and be satisfied?'

"He inquired after two young friends, members of college, who were absent from the city, and expressed a strong desire to see them. 'Remember me most affectionately to them. I have ever loved them dearly. Tell them to live for God entirely, to give themselves wholly to preparation for his service. I hope they will do much to advance the cause of holiness in the world. I do hope they will both preach the glorious gospel. Tell them to be careful for nothing in this world. If they will do the will of God, he will take care of them. Let them never be ashamed of Christ, but dare to be devoted, decided Christians in college and everywhere. I wish I had been more faithful to them than I have been. I hope, however, to meet them in heaven, where there is no separation for ever. O be faithful to your little E——. Tell her I want her to be a Christian. Train her for God and for heaven. I hope she will be a missionary yet.'

"At another time he spoke of the many favors he had received during his college course, and the many friends who had been raised up for him. 'O help me,' he said, 'to thank them, and help me to praise God for them. "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life." How wonderful, that one so unworthy should have received such

signal mercies as I have.' To one who inquired if his soul was in peace, he said, 'Ah, yes, more than that, "I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." I would not exchange situations with any of you. O, the condescension, the wonderful love of Jesus. I want you to sing his praise. I have often heard of Christians telling of the sweet comforts given them upon a dying bed; but I never could have believed them so sweet. I have enjoyed more while on this bed, than in all my life before. I am full of happiness to overflowing. I seem to have done with prayer, and to have nothing to do but praise.'

"I could fill many sheets with his expressions of love, joy, and praise. But they were thrown out in connection with things too personal to repeat, without violating the sacred confidence of private friendship. It was altogether one of the most interesting scenes I ever witnessed. In short, it was just such a death as might have been expected after such a life.

"From the first of my acquaintance with him, I was struck with his calm, simple, straightforward course. It was ever onward and upward. He *dared* to be a whole-hearted Christian. Whatever others did, he determined to serve God with all his heart. He came among us, pursued his studies ardently, entered into our concerns, gained our love and confidence, and showed us that it is possible to fulfil all the duties of life with fidelity, and yet not to be of

the world while in it. I think that all who knew Charles H. Porter needed no argument to convince them of the reality of religion. He was its 'living epistle, known and read of all men.'"

The following obituary notice, supposed to have been written by Rev. Mr. Ludlow, supplies a few additional particulars.

"Died at New Haven, on Sabbath evening, Sept. 26, 1841, Mr. Charles H. Porter, a student in the Theological Seminary, and lately licensed to preach the gospel. To those acquainted with Mr. Porter, it will not be a matter of surprise that his dying hour was one of peculiar triumph. His piety was of no ordinary character. Through his college course it burned with unabated fervor, and amidst his studies he was the consistent Christian. Very great success in winning souls to Christ followed his labors, and very many, doubtless, will meet him at the judgment-day, who shall 'be his joy and the crown of his rejoicing.'

"The writer of this communication was permitted to walk by his side through that part of 'the valley of the shadow of death,' which lies upon the borders of the King's country, the land of Beulah, which is illuminated by the splendors of that city, of which the 'Lamb is the light.'

"'Brother Porter,' said I, 'do you think you are

dying?' With much composure he replied, 'Judging from my feelings, I should not think I was; but my judgment tells me I am.' 'Have you any peculiar views?' said I. 'No, Christ has always been sweet to me. You know I never had any confidence in death-bed repentance and high flights, when the life had been wicked; but I cannot see why a person who has embraced the doctrines of Christianity, and tried humbly to live up to them, should not die peacefully. I have often heard of sweet death-beds, but I never knew it was so inexpressibly sweet. O it is sweet to live, and it is sweet to die.' He then left messages for his brethren in the seminary, his mother, and several others. His friends were constantly administering to him, hoping to resuscitate his sinking frame. 'You are trying,' said he, 'to add a few more minutes to my life, but I would rather hear brother L—— ask me more questions and draw me out.' He expressed great pleasure in thus testifying for his Saviour. He then asked us to sing; and upon being requested to tell us what, said,

'Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are.'

And with a clear voice united in singing the whole stanza. This is but part of the precious things he said, his face all the time radiant with an unearthly smile. All around him felt as if they understood what our Saviour meant, when he said, 'He that

liveth and believeth in me *shall never die.*' Not one fear disturbed his last moments. With triumph he exclaimed, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth me the victory through my Lord Jesus Christ.' His sun went down in a cloudless sky.

> 'Sweet is the scene where Christians die,
> Where holy souls retire to rest;
> How mildly beams the closing eye,
> How gently heaves th' expiring breast.' "

Since his death, a revival has taken place in Norwich; two sisters of Mr. Porter are among the converts, and many others attribute their conversion to impressions originating with the news of his death. Thus, in this providence, God has spoken effectually to the hearts of some who knew him, and who, without it, might never have been brought to repentance.

His body slumbers in the cemetery at New Haven, where a plain marble monument, erected by his fellow-students in theology, bears, at his request, the inscription, "PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD." And it is hoped, that not only his gravestone will preach, as he wished it might do, this solemn admonition, but that his memoir also will be influential in bringing some of his former friends and acquaintance to renew their friendship with him in the presence of God in heaven.

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